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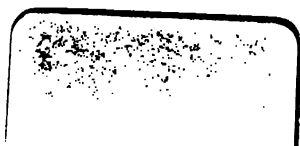
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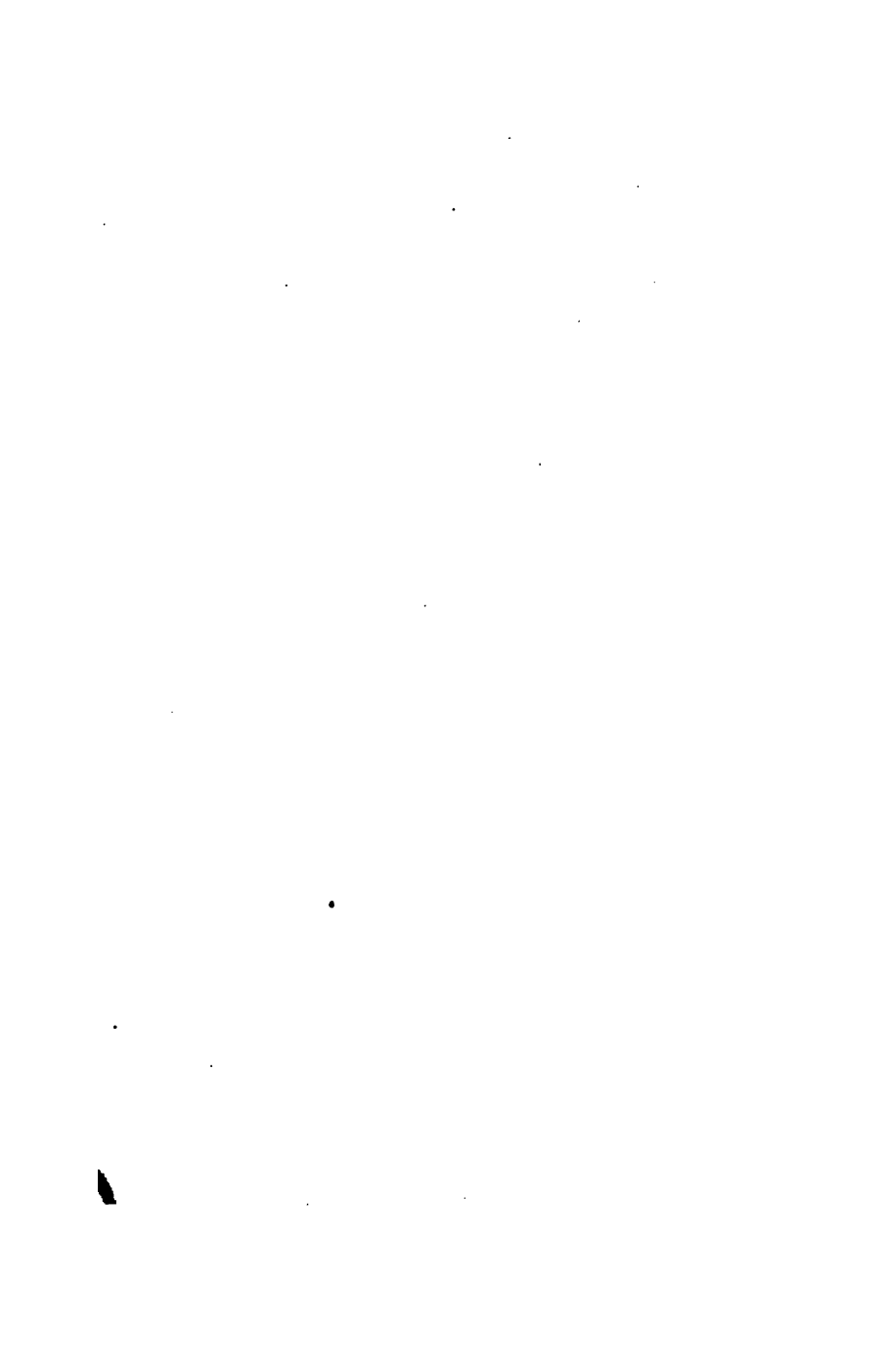
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THE  
GOLDMAKERS' VILLAGE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN

OF

H. ZSCHOKKE.



LONDON :  
JAMES BURNS, 17, PORTMAN STREET,  
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## Preface.

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THE object which the translator has in view in offering this little work to the Public, at a moment when the very important subject of which it treats has excited so warm and active an interest in our own country, is to give a wider circulation to the ideas of an intelligent writer, much appreciated in his native country; and though it is evident, that differences of habits and character must render many of the expedients suggested inapplicable in England, yet it is hoped that this simple narrative of the exertions of Oswald, in behalf of his poor neighbours, may be read with pleasure, and may possibly offer some useful hints to those admirable persons who are so nobly devoting their time and fortune to the amelioration of the condition of our own poor.



The German tale has gone through seven editions, and, with the exception of a very few omitted passages, the original has been strictly adhered to.



# Contents.

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CHAPTER	PAGE
I.—OSWALD RETURNS FROM THE WARS, AND WHAT IS SAID OF HIM . . .	1
II.—WHAT OSWALD SEES IN THE VILLAGE . . .	5
III.—THE WISE DISCOURSE OF THE MILLER . . .	9
IV.—WHAT STRANGE THINGS OSWALD DOES, AND ALL TO NO PURPOSE . . .	14
V.—HOW OSWALD IS PERSECUTED BY HIS ENEMIRS, AND WHAT HE DOES . . .	20
VI.—THE NEW SCHOOLMASTER . . .	25
VII.—HOW OSWALD KEPT HIS SCHOOL . . .	32
VIII.—WHAT ELSE HAPPENS IN THE SCHOOL . . .	36
IX.—THE SUNDAY SCHOOL, AND WHAT HAPPENED AT THE MILL . . .	41
X.—OSWALD BECOMES VERY UNPOPULAR . . .	47
XI.—ELIZABETH MAKES MANY FRIENDS . . .	52
XII.—THE LANDLORD OF THE LION SETS OUT UPON A JOURNEY, AND WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM	58
XIII.—THE GOLDMAKERS' LEAGUE . . .	63
XIV.—THE ASTONISHMENT OF THE GOLDENTHALERS	68
XV.—OSWALD INQUIRES ABOUT THEIR DEBTS.—THE SAVINGS-BANK AND THE SOUP KITCHEN	71
XVI.—THE NUMBER OF PUBLIC-HOUSES DIMINISH, AND WHAT THE OLD PEASANTS SAY ABOUT IT	78

CHAPTER	PAGE
XXVII.—THE PARSONAGE IS STRUCK BY LIGHTNING.— A NEW CLERGYMAN . . . .	84
XXVIII.—MORE OF THE NEW CLERGYMAN . . . .	89
XIX.—WHAT WAS SAID OF THE GOLDENTHALERS	97
XX.—THE NEW OVERSEERS AND THE LANDLORD OF THE LION . . . .	105
XXI.—THE AUGEAN STABLE MUST BE CLEANSED	111
XXII.—THE DEBTS MUST BE PAID . . . .	116
XXIII.—ONCE MORE, THE DEBTS MUST BE PAID	122
XXIV.—STILL GREATER IMPROVEMENTS TAKE PLACE	128
XXV.—THERE IS STILL GREAT DISTRESS IN THE VILLAGE . . . .	133
XXVI.—WHAT THE GOLDENTHALERS DID WITH THEIR PAUPERS . . . .	140
XXVII.—PRACTICE IS BETTER THAN THEORY . . . .	150
XXVIII.—ANOTHER NOVELTY . . . .	156
XXIX.—WHAT THE GOLDMAKERS' VILLAGE HAD BECOME . . . .	162
XXX.—THE CHRISTENING . . . .	168

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# THE GOLDMAKERS' VILLAGE.

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## CHAPTER I.

OSWALD RETURNS FROM THE WARS, AND WHAT IS SAID OF HIM.

ONE Sunday afternoon the young men and maidens of the village of Goldenthal were seated under an old lime-tree, where they amused themselves with laughing at those who, having drunk too deeply, came staggering out of the three ale-houses in which the older peasants with their wives were carousing, and where they drank, and talked, and fought, as is often the case when wine and beer are cheap.

A stout, tall man about thirty years of age entered the village: he was dressed in an old grey military coat—with a sword by his side and a knapsack on his shoulders; he had a wild look, for across his forehead was a deep scar, and his large black mustachios frightened away all the children who came near him; but two old women whom he addressed, immediately recognised him, and exclaimed, "Surely this is Oswald, the schoolmaster's son, who went to the wars seventeen years ago; look how tall and

strong he is grown !” and at this exclamation, both old and young hurried from the ale-houses, and the lime-tree, and soon all the inhabitants of the village were assembled round Oswald. He shook hands with his former acquaintances, spoke kindly to all, and said he was come back to live in Goldenthal, that he was tired of a soldier’s life, and was very glad to have done with it. Every one now tried to get him into an ale-house, some to drink his welcome home, others to hear his adventures in the wars ; but Oswald resisted all their persuasions, and said, “ I am tired with travelling, and wish to rest—who lives in the house of my late father, and who cultivates his land ?” Upon this, the miller advanced and said, “ The parish officers have given me the care of your little property ; and I have let both house and land to Steffen the weaver ; but now that you are returned, he must restore them. You had better come home with me for a few days, until the weaver can find another house ; and I will give you an account of what I have done.” So the miller took his guest to the mill, and gave him a good supper and a comfortable bed. But Oswald had many questions to ask about his native village, which the miller and his wife were very ready to answer ; so they talked on till midnight. Moreover, on the other side of the table, and opposite to Oswald, sat the miller’s pretty daughter, whose name was Elizabeth ; and he found it difficult to take his eyes from her, for she was, indeed, lovely. Oswald also was a handsome man,

in spite of his enormous mustachios, and his language and manners were courteous and agreeable, as if he were a gentleman ; so that Elizabeth never raised her large black eyes when he looked at her, and was afraid of speaking to him. Nevertheless, she did say something about his terrible mustachios.

When he came to breakfast the following morning the mustachios had disappeared. Oswald would willingly have remained his whole life in the mill. The miller and his wife were excellent people, and goodness shone bright and clear in Elizabeth's eyes ; but at the end of a week, Oswald was obliged to go into his own house and look after his land. He had five acres of garden and meadow, and five acres of arable land ; and he bought a fine cow with the rents which the miller had kept for him.

As the cottage was old and in ruins, he obtained some timber and stone from the parish, and had it thoroughly repaired, cleaned, and whitewashed. He worked hard himself from morning till night, building, carpentering, and painting ; for he wished it to be complete, but not expensive. By the autumn his little cottage in the midst of a garden, and by the side of a stream was the neatest in the village, and the garden was one of the prettiest in the neighbourhood. The paths between the beds were well gravelled ; and he was very happy when the miller's daughter, who had already given him some flowers, looked over the green, well-trimmed hedge, and promised him more in the spring.

For a great while the inhabitants of Goldenthal did not know what to make of Oswald. When he arrived, they saw well enough how poor he had returned from the wars. He had received a box from the town with clothes and linen—it also contained a few books; and these were all his riches. “Let him alone,” said one, “he is a poor devil, and a stupid one too, not to have made his fortune in the wars. He has not been once in the ale-house on a Sunday—he is forced to work like a horse from sunrise to sunset. It is lucky for him that his father left him some land, or he would have come upon the parish.” “It is certain,” said another, “he has done no great deeds, for he has nothing to tell; and who knows where the fool got that scar upon his forehead? He is glad enough to be no longer food for powder.” “Have nothing to say to him,” said a third, “he has learnt no good in the wars. He has looks that nobody can read, not even the clergyman himself. They are full of signs and characters that are dreadful to behold. Who knows but what he has dealings with the devil, and can conjure him up?” “God preserve us!” said others. “It is clear enough there is something wrong about him—he has never allowed any one to go into his back room, not even the miller, who has a great deal to do with him; the watchman sees a light burning there all night, shining between the shutters. The room is always closed, and the blinds not even opened in broad daylight.”

Such was the discourse of the villagers upon the arrival of Oswald.

## CHAPTER II.

## WHAT OSWALD SEES IN THE VILLAGE.

ALTHOUGH the villagers could not make much out of Oswald, he was, nevertheless, well disposed and friendly towards them. At first he went to all their houses, visited them one after another, inquired for their children, about their land, talked of the best methods of cultivation, and shewed a great interest in all their concerns.

Goldenthal had been formerly a very flourishing village ; it is true there were no great riches, but content and comfort were in every house. At this time, however, with the exception of the miller, the inn-keepers, and a few rich peasants, every one was in distress—poverty looked out of every window ; and meagre was the fare on every board. The village was composed of about a hundred houses, of which, at least, twenty sent their children out to beg : sixty got on as they could, burdened with debt and misery, while the remaining twenty were alone capable of paying rates and taxes, and supporting themselves comfortably.

The exterior of the houses shewed visibly the



misery within; the roofs had fallen, the plaster had dropped from the walls, the doors were encrusted with mud, and the windows broken and stopped up with paper. In the interior all was dirt and untidiness: rickety tables, greasy benches; and if there was such a thing as a looking-glass, it had been covered for years with flymarks—the floors were full of holes, the kitchen furniture scanty and bad, and not even clean. In the little gardens there was no order, no neatness, nothing but a few herbs hastily planted—the wretched inhabitants were satisfied if they had enough potatoes for themselves and their pigs; before the door lay tools, wood, everything that could not be brought into the house, and always a dung-hill. Men and women went about in torn and dirty clothes, matted and uncombed hair, hands or faces often unwashed for days together—the young children were left half the day untouched in their cradles, and the elder ones played nearly naked in the dirt before the doors.

No wonder that such odious habits caused much sickness—they preferred, however, consulting an old woman, a quack, or a mountebank, if it would save money, rather than a clever and experienced physician. If the husband or wife kept their bed, and could not work, everything went to rack and ruin. Furniture, cattle, or even land, were disposed of at a loss, or money borrowed at a high interest: this lasted till they had more debts than property, and then followed beggary and wretchedness.

When Oswald blamed their improvidence and want of order, and gave them good advice, his only thanks were sulky looks—some said, “How can poor folks have every thing so neat? We must take things as they come;” others said “What is it to you, mind your own business.” The houses of the rich peasants, of course, were different, and their furniture and dress were superior, but even among them, there was much disorder and neglect, for surrounded as they were with beggary and dirt, they became accustomed to it, and scarcely attempted to be better themselves. On week-days they were always in rags, and on Sundays they were covered with finery. Besides all this, the inhabitants of Goldenthal had constant feuds and disputes. No one trusted his neighbour. They cursed, they swore, each spoke ill of the other; the poor envied the rich, who in their turn, tormented and oppressed the poor, and when they lent money, required an exorbitant interest, taking from miserable wretches in distress, twelve, twenty, and even more per cent, without having the conscience to be ashamed of such extortion. The poor revenged themselves as bad men do; they injured the rich man’s trees, stole his fruit and vegetables, his poultry, his wood, and everything that it was possible to lay their hands upon. No promise, no oath could be trusted; even between man and wife there was discord and hatred, and what the children saw continually, they soon learned to imitate. Notwithstanding the visible increase of poverty in the parish, and that no one had

ever money to pay what he owed, yet they led indolent lives. Nobody troubled himself much about work; the farmers when they came late to the field, or left it early, said, "Thank God we can do as we please!" and the labourers, when they threw up their work, and lounged idly about, said "One cannot labour like a beast of burden; a man must have a little rest sometimes." But when Saturday night and Sunday came, every one had money enough to indulge himself in the public houses, with beer, wine, and brandy; nothing was heard, but "Here landlord, one pint more; Hallo! bring the cards."—All the earnings of the week, and often more, were spent in drink; they gambled too—one lost his money, and another soon drank his winnings. Even during the week, the ale-house was not forgotten, for they were a thirsty set. In the meantime, their wives and children had scarcely enough food to keep them from starving. There was no want of holidays; and every one was ready to make the most of them. On market-days in the neighbouring towns, they all went to hear the news, and see what was going on in the public houses. There were various excuses for coming and going. There were lawsuits and trials, and appeals, in which they spent much time and money, and obtained little profit or advantage. The consequence was, that every one's property rather diminished than increased, and all complained equally of bad times, bad government, and bad neighbours.

## CHAPTER III.

## THE WISE DISCOURSE OF THE MILLER.

OSWALD was much grieved to find his native village so sunk in vice and misery; he went to the mill, as was his custom whenever he felt unhappy, and his grief fled before Elizabeth's sweet smiles, like the mist on the mountain side before the bright rays of the sun.

"How is it," said Oswald to the miller, "that the people here are so wicked, and every one in such distress? It was not so formerly—then they worked diligently in the fields; the village was neat, and each cottage was the abode of peace and comfort. The peasantry were highly esteemed by the townspeople, who called them the Lords of Goldenthal. Now everything is changed, and under each roof sit poverty and wickedness! How can the war have done so much mischief?"

The miller answered, "It is true our village has suffered much from the war, but so have many other villages and towns. Troops were quartered upon us, and consumed our provisions; we were forced to obey the soldiers, and give them whatever they

wanted; we had taxes and contributions to pay, all commerce was at an end, trade was destroyed, and after that came bad years and severe seasons, so that the hay and corn failed, and even the fruit-trees and the vines were destroyed. But our distress proceeds from neither war, nor famine. Other places have suffered like us, and are now beginning to recover and to hold up their heads again; but our village becomes every day more wretched, and we only go from bad to worse."

"May God preserve us!" said Oswald; "what can be the cause of it all?"

"The cause is," replied the miller, "that others make every effort to resist misfortune, and save themselves by their own exertions, while we allow ourselves to be the sport of accident, and leave our safety to chance. Even those who might help us, bring us into still greater difficulties."

"And who are they?" said Oswald.

"I will tell you in confidence," said the miller. "When a parish goes to ruin in this way, you may be assured that it is ill-managed; and that is the case with us—our parish officers are either selfish men, or weak, silly, ignorant people. Two of them keep public-houses, and the son-in-law of the third has also a beer-house. They are, therefore, better pleased to see their neighbours drinking in their houses, than hard at work. When persons have any affairs to arrange, they meet in one or other of these alehouses, and of course they end in drinking.

If these thirsty souls have no money, they get drink upon credit; if they cannot pay their debts, one bit of land after another is given in pledge, or the whole sold by auction. Then comes beggary; by degrees, every field and farm falls into the hands of a few men, and whoever wants to borrow money goes to them, and pays double and treble interest; and by this unchristian usury, the needy are irrevocably ruined."

"But why do not those who must borrow money, get it from other places, or from honest lenders in the capital?" said Oswald.

"Because no one will trust our people with a kreutzer," \* answered the miller, "for nearly all those who have lent us money, have been totally ruined by it. So we have no longer any credit, or hope of assistance from others. Now that no one in the town will lend us money, our villagers abuse and rail at the townspeople; and should any misfortune happen to them, it would cause the greatest joy to our wretched population, although we still receive much advantage as well as charity from them."

"That is a sad state of things," said Oswald. "But have we not still a large portion of common land?"

"Yes; but it is much encumbered with debt, and profits no one," replied the miller. "When the parish-officers have business to transact, such as making a tour of the boundaries, a survey of timber,

\* There are sixty kreutzers in a florin, the value of which is about twenty pence in English money.

or anything of that kind, then they eat and drink at the expense of the community. Thus the property of the parish disappears down the throats of those who should be its guardians."

"That is all very bad," cried Oswald. "Even if men have no sense or judgment, they should at least be guided by conscience and the fear of God."

"To be sure they should," said the miller; "but how are they to learn it? Our clergyman is an old man, who cares much for his own ease, and performs his duties mechanically, as another man would his day's work; and when he has got through it, gives himself no further trouble about anything. What sin really is, how it may be avoided, in what the Christian virtues consist, how they are to be acquired and exercised, *that* he never teaches. For years together he never goes into a poor man's house, unless actually sent for; he can give no good advice, no true consolation, for he is not sufficiently acquainted with the real state of families to be able to labour effectually for their improvement in piety and virtue. The clergyman preaches from habit—the people go to church from habit; and when they return home, they resume their usual vice and profligacy from habit. And while their hearts remain unimproved, so do their outward circumstances; and this applies to all, both young and old."

"But does the schoolmaster do no good?" inquired Oswald.

"Since the death of your father, who was a virtu-

ous and sensible man," answered the miller, "the school has gone on badly. It is true that both boys and girls learn reading, writing, and arithmetic, and now and then a prayer or two. But from their parents they learn what they see,—lying and cheating, swearing and cursing, fighting and quarrelling, begging and stealing, gaming and drinking, idleness and insolence, vice and debauchery."

When Oswald heard these things, he shook his head, and went home full of sad thoughts.



## CHAPTER IV.

WHAT STRANGE THINGS OSWALD DOES, AND ALL TO NO  
PURPOSE.

ONE Sunday after church, all the villagers were assembled. The overseers\* knew not which way to turn for money. Besides an additional tax which had been laid on land, a debt was claimed from the parish, increased by long arrears of interest which had never been regularly paid, and all the inhabitants, according to an old custom, were collected under the great lime-tree, to consider what could be done. The overseers were in the circle with the other men, and beyond them stood the women and children to hear what passed.

Oswald was there, too ; and had determined to endeavour to open the eyes of his neighbours to their melancholy situation. Therefore, as soon as the parish-officers had made their proposition, and ended their discourse, Oswald stood upon a large stone which lay in the middle of the road, so that every

\* There is no office in an English village precisely corresponding to the German "vorsteher," who appears to combine the duties of overseer of the poor, churchwarden, and justice of the peace.

one could see him, and spoke in the following words : —“ Dear fellow-countrymen ! I left you, young in years and in feelings, to go to the wars, and I have returned to you a grave and careworn man. But when I reached our village, I hardly knew it again, and my heart was sad and sorrowful to see how strangely everything was changed. Formerly our village was rightly called Goldenthal,\* for it was in truth a vale of riches, where God's blessing dwelt even more than elsewhere. Most of us were in good circumstances, few were poor, and none were beggars. At that time, from our flourishing condition, we were called in the country the Lords of Goldenthal. For we were not covered with rags like paupers, but went about in neat, though simple clothing, and had not only the means of procuring all the necessities of life, but a florin or two to spare for accidents. Then the parish had no heavy debt ; on the contrary, we lent money to others. The land was well cultivated ; every one had a horse in his stable, a cow, a few sheep and goats, or perhaps a couple of pigs. The cottages were neat and clean, within and without, so that even a gentleman might have been glad to live in them. All the furniture and the kitchen utensils were in the highest order ; and the windows shone like looking-glass. Few people owed anything, and those who did were at no loss how to pay it. At that time an inhabitant of Goldenthal could have borrowed a hundred florins or more upon his own word, without

\* *Thal*, a valley.

bond or pledge. That was indeed a golden time for Goldenthal !”

Whilst Oswald spoke, many persons gave signs of approbation, and some said “Oswald is quite right.”

But he went on to say, “Now, however, everything is changed. Our village should no longer be called Goldenthal, but the vale of thorns and thistles, vice and misery. The blessing of God has left our fields,—some of us have too much land, others too little ; and few know how to cultivate and improve it. Many no longer consider beggary as a disgrace, but as a regular profession and means of living. Most families are in debt, and see the day approaching when everything they possess must be sold, and themselves turned out of their homes. We have quarrels and law-suits with our neighbours, and among ourselves enmities and disputes. We have our former pride without our former riches ; our streets are full of mud and mire, our houses of dirt and filth ; but the blackest of all are our own hearts : every one finds it easier to drink than to work ; to borrow than to pay ; to steal than to give ; to deceive than to speak the truth. If this continues we must soon be utterly lost in misery and in shame. Already no one will give us credit ; and when men wish to describe a pauper, they say he is a ‘Goldenthaler.’”

At these words, there arose a great murmuring among the people, and many gave Oswald such fierce and menacing looks, that the miller’s daughter was quite terrified ; for she was standing before her door

and never moved her eyes from him whom in her heart she loved so well. Oswald, however, was not alarmed by their loud and threatening voices, but continued, "Dear fellow-countrymen, if one drop of honest and true blood still flows in your veins, join hand-in-hand and declare, This shall and must be changed. What is the cause of our distress? I will tell you whence it comes. From those public-houses! Your fields have melted away into beer and wine, and your cattle have vanished before cards and dice. It is, there, you have forgotten to work and to save. Poverty teaches roguery, and idleness is the devil's resting-place. The money your fathers saved, is all gone; but if you have a few kreutzers in your pockets, you drink gaily and let your wives and children starve at home. What is to be done? I ask the parish officers, Why do you not give a true account of the property which has been intrusted to you? and why do you not seek a remedy for these growing evils? why do you not shut up the ale-houses and set the people to drain the marshes, or mend the break-neck roads which surround the village?" At these words, the overseers exclaimed, "Hold your tongue! you are a vagabond and a mischief-maker; be silent, or we will send you to prison and keep you eight-and-forty hours on bread and water"—and every one called out "Silence! Silence!" But Oswald continued, "You have the power to send me to prison; but I have also the power to call you to account before the Government. If I were to make known

how you have abused your trust, you would fare worse than I should upon bread and water. But, my friends, you can tell me, if I speak falsely or calumniously. Ask your consciences if you are become richer or poorer? If truth and justice any longer exist among us? If we are guided by the fear of God and the love of our neighbour, or by hard-hearted selfishness, cunning, envy, avarice, profligacy, and falsehood? And if your consciences do not tell you, look at your ruined cottages, your fields and gardens overrun with weeds, your empty money-chests and purses, your tattered clothes! these are my witnesses against you! Look at your poor neglected children! these are my witnesses against you! You care more for your cows, pigs, and goats, than for your children; but you care less for your cows, pigs, and goats, than you do for drunkenness, and gambling, vice, and debauchery."

Oswald would have said still more, but with dreadful cries they began to pelt him with stones, and would not listen to him. Some tried to lay hold of him, but he seized them with his powerful arm; and, lifting up his large stick, threatened to fell to the ground the first who dared approach him. The rage against him grew louder and louder: more stones were thrown; but Oswald laid his cudgel heartily about him; and, forcing his way through the crowd, regained his own house. He washed the blood from his forehead, which had been struck by a stone, bound it up and tried to compose himself.

And soon Elizabeth appeared, bathed in tears and pale as death. She asked him if he was hurt—she could say no more from grief and fear; but he soon succeeded in quieting her alarm, and consoled her with kind and tender words.

## CHAPTER V.

HOW OSWALD IS PERSECUTED BY HIS ENEMIES, AND WHAT  
HE DOES.

FROM the day that Oswald harangued the people, he experienced much grief and annoyance. One night stones were thrown, and his windows broken by mischievous boys; on another night six of the young fruit-trees he had planted in his garden were cut down, and the next evening all his vegetables were stolen. When he complained to the overseers, they laughed at him and said, "You would have a much worse punishment if you were only treated as you deserve. Go along; you are a slanderer, and a backbiter." But Oswald said, "If you will give me no protection from these villains, at least make known to the whole parish that I am able to defend myself, and every one had better be on his guard." His enemies, however, continued to torment him, but not without risk and danger to themselves; for, one evening, when knowing he was at the mill, they went into his garden to destroy what they could—they were very much astonished at two shots going

off suddenly from the windows of his house. They ran away as fast as possible, and thought he must have set the devil to watch his house in his absence; for, as they were running with all speed, they met Oswald returning from the mill, who, seizing one of them, said in a voice of thunder, "Thieves and villains! what have you been about in my garden!" However, he let them go without doing them any harm. Another time when, at midnight, some drunken vagabonds got over the hedge which surrounded his garden, intending to play him some trick, their feet had scarcely touched the ground, when they were caught and wounded by a sharp instrument, so that they could with difficulty get back again. These and other circumstances spread a great alarm all through the village, and no one dared approach Oswald's house at night.

He continued, however, to be as kind and neighbourly to them as at first, giving them good advice, and even assisting them with money when in distress; but the miserable state of the village grieved him much, and one day he went to the clergyman and complained to him on the subject. But he answered, "I am only the clergyman and have no power here; besides, I am not going to meddle with the affairs of others. The cause of all the misery of this village is, that the people are sunk in the darkness and mire of sin; but the anger of the Lord will overtake them, and the long-suffering of Heaven will not always spare them."



"But, sir," said Oswald, "allow me to say, you could yourself, if you would, do a great deal towards reforming these people, for their hearts are corrupt, because their minds are in darkness. If you would interest yourself in the school, and see that the children are brought up in moral and Christian principles, a speedy improvement would not be long in shewing itself."

But the clergyman replied, "That is the school-master's business, not mine. I have too much to do, to have any time to spare for it. It is the fault of the parish-officers, who can get no proper school-master because they pay him so ill."

"Honoured sir," said Oswald, "a good shepherd, who truly cares for his flock, troubles himself about every member of it. The poor are ignorant, and are often ruined by ignorance alone, for they know not how to manage their own affairs. If you were to spend some of your leisure time among them, and to see the excessive folly of these poor creatures, whose distress often arises from want of knowledge of the way to help themselves;—if you saw how by degrees they become accustomed to misery and wretchedness, till at last they are driven from house and home; if you saw how impossible it is for the shamefully neglected children to grow up otherwise than depraved when they have none but the vilest examples before their eyes;—O sir, if you were to see—"

But here the clergyman interrupted Oswald, ex-

claiming, "What is that to you? Will you give your clergyman advice, and teach him how to do his duty? Let me hear no more of your foolish experiments."

When Oswald heard these angry words, he went away grieved at heart; but he could not give the matter up, and said to himself, "There must be some remedy to be found, and by the help of God it SHALL be found !

And he dressed himself in his best clothes, took his stick, and travelled to the capital. There he went from one office to another; from one great personage to another, to endeavour to gain some attention to his melancholy story. But one gentleman gave a great dinner that day, and could not attend to him: another was playing at cards, and would not listen to him; a third was just then receiving his rents, and could not see him; and a fourth was going out with his daughters, and would have nothing to say to him. Last of all he came to one who did see him; he was a very old man, with an old-fashioned white wig. To this man Oswald poured out his whole heart; he described the misery of the village; the villainy of the overseers, the indifference of the clergyman, the ignorance of the schoolmaster. But the old gentleman in the white wig answered him,

"What a fool you are to speak ill of your superiors, both temporal and spiritual, in this manner; get along with you, and hold your tongue.—As for

your clergyman, he is an excellent man. Why he is my own cousin !”

This was enough for Oswald : and he left the city, but when he passed through the gates and came again into the country, he felt as if his heart would break, and he burst into a flood of tears.

## CHAPTER VI.

## THE NEW SCHOOLMASTER.

IN the evening, when Oswald reached the village, he did not tell any one why he had gone to the city, nor what had taken place there; on the contrary, he tried to appear pleased and satisfied, and spoke civilly to every one, even to his greatest enemy, Brenzel, the landlord of the Lion, who was the richest man in the parish, and the principal overseer; he was standing at his own door, his arms folded, his hat on one side, and looking to the right and left in an overbearing manner. "Good evening, Brenzel," said Oswald; "is your day's work already done?"

Brenzel nodded condescendingly, and answered without looking at him. "I should have work enough to deserve my daily bread, if I only staid at home to drive the beggars from my door with a horsewhip."

When Oswald heard these harsh and unchristian words from an overseer of the parish—one who should be a father to the poor, the widow, and the orphan, his blood boiled with indignation; he hurried away, and it was a great relief to him when, as he passed

the mill, he perceived Elizabeth, the miller's pretty daughter, seated on a bench before the house, under the shade of a large cherry-tree, busily employed in needlework. She coloured very much when she saw Oswald, smiled, and gave him her trembling hand; but her eyes shone through tears. "Elizabeth," said Oswald, in a tone of great anxiety and alarm, "you have been crying! what can have occasioned these tears?"

Elizabeth wiped her eyes quickly, smiled still more kindly on him, and said, "I cannot tell you now, dear Oswald, some time or other you shall know."

She appeared to him lovelier and more engaging than ever; but say what he would he could not find out the cause of her tears.

"You have been to the city," said Elizabeth to him; "I suppose you have passed two very gay days there. Did you dance with many pretty girls? What! you sigh about it, Oswald. I do not like that sigh; you want to go back to the town—there is nothing good enough to please you in our poor little village."

At these words he looked very unhappy, but did not answer. She came nearer to him and said in a faltering voice, which was scarcely audible, "Oswald, tell me truly what is it that grieves you?"

"Dear Elizabeth," said Oswald, raising his eyes to heaven, "God knows how happy I might be here, and I am happier with you than with any one else in the world, for you are good and kind. But I

grieve for the wickedness of the people, for most of them are bad and heartless. Look at the wretchedness of the inhabitants of our poor Goldenthal, and yet it would not cost so much to save them. Our parish-officers care for nothing but the power, and dignity, and advantages which their situations give them; and no one considers it his business and his duty to seek some radical cure for the misery of the poor. They think only of enriching their families, and getting their sons and daughters forwards in the world. They never see the faults or errors of each other, so the distress of the country continues to increase; but these gentlemen do not disturb themselves about it—and praise one another for their wisdom and goodness without shame or compunction.”

“But, dear Oswald,” said Elizabeth, “why should that trouble you so much? There is a just God in heaven who will punish those who neglect their duties. Why torment yourself about it?”

Oswald answered: “Were I in hell, witnessing the abominations of the devil, and the agonies of the condemned, could I be myself at rest? So, I cannot be at peace on earth when I am surrounded by those who, from excess of poverty are almost like brutes, rude, coarse, disgusting, dirty, insensible; and are they not become worse than brutes from the crimes which poverty brings with it—envy, strife, idleness, theft, and drunkenness?”

“Ah!” said Elizabeth, “the old schoolmaster has been well punished for his love of drinking; he was

returning home drunk from the Eagle the night before last, and going too near the pond he fell into it and was drowned. He was found yesterday morning, and to-day he is to be buried. Luckily he had neither wife nor child."

Oswald listened to this intelligence with the greatest appearance of interest ; he asked several questions, and seemed to have something important in his mind ; and soon after he went thoughtfully home. Elizabeth could not imagine what had struck him so suddenly, but the following Sunday she learnt it all.

After church, the whole parish assembled to elect a new schoolmaster. Oswald was present, and Elizabeth stood at a distance with the women and children. She was greatly alarmed lest Oswald should speak and say something that would displease the people, and had entreated her father if Oswald became angry to try and appease him—so the miller Siegfried never left his side.

Brenzel, the principal overseer, explained to the people the object of the meeting, saying, "that as the office of schoolmaster was vacant, and was one of much trouble and very ill-paid, the salary being only forty florins a-year, it was very fortunate for the parish that he had it in his power to propose to them a most excellent man who was willing to undertake the office. This was Specht, the tailor, whose trade was not flourishing, and who was in some degree related to himself.

Upon this the landlord of the Eagle, the second

overseer, proposed his cousin Schluck, the lame fiddler, who, he said, deserved the preference as, in consideration of the poverty of the parish, he was willing to undertake the office for thirty-five instead of forty florins.

But when Specht the tailor saw that matters were going against him, and that most of the people were in favour of the fiddler, he began to abuse him in every possible way, and declared that he would be satisfied with thirty florins. This enraged the fiddler to such a degree, that he called Specht a thief, a rogue, and a lying villain, and offered himself as schoolmaster for twenty-five florins. The tailor declared that he would bring the fiddler before a magistrate for slandering him, but he would not be schoolmaster with so paltry a salary.

As no one else proposed himself for the office, (for no respectable man would undertake an employment that was held in such contempt, and only sought for by those who had no other means of obtaining a livelihood,) it was determined that it should be given to Schluck, for he actually could both read and write, and even cast accounts upon an emergency.

But at this moment, Oswald started forwards, changing colour as he spoke, and exclaimed, "Why, you pay the very cowkeepers and swineherds who drive your cattle to the pastures better than you do the schoolmaster, who should bring up your sons and daughters in the love of God, and all good and useful knowledge. Your children are human beings,



created in the image of God ; but so are not your cattle. Shame, shame upon you ! But I know well enough that the parish coffers are always empty when money is wanted for this most important purpose ; and how can poor wretches pay for the education of their children, who have not even wherewithal to buy bread, potatoes, and salt ? However, there is one thing left to be tried, and I offer myself as your schoolmaster without any salary. I repeat it : I will be your schoolmaster, and it shall not cost either the parish or any individual one kreutzer."

The villagers looked at one another and at Oswald with the utmost astonishment. Some were not inclined to accept his offer, lest he should sell the souls of the poor little children to the devil ; but the greater number were aware that no one else would fulfil the office without any salary, and loudly declared that Oswald should be schoolmaster. So Oswald was chosen by a great majority of voices. When Elizabeth heard this, she was overwhelmed with shame and mortification. For, in that village, except the watchman and the swineherd, there was no one so despised and looked down upon as the schoolmaster. She ran home and hid herself, as if the heaviest misfortune and the greatest disgrace had befallen her. Even her excellent father Siegfried, the miller, shook his head gravely, and said, "I do believe that Oswald must be out of his senses." But nothing could alter Oswald's determination. The customary forms were soon gone through by the

parish officers. He passed his examination in the neighbouring town; and as he wrote a beautiful hand, and knew much more of arithmetic than was thought necessary for peasants to learn, he was speedily installed in his office.

## CHAPTER VII.

## HOW OSWALD KEPT HIS SCHOOL.

"ELIZABETH, Elizabeth, why these eternal regrets and lamentations?" said Oswald to Siegfried's sorrowful daughter. "Do you not see that the old people are thoroughly corrupt, and it is hardly possible to improve them; but I may be able, perhaps, by careful attention to the education of the children, to restore our wretched village to honour and good repute. A village schoolmaster is, perhaps, a poor and despised man; but how low did our Lord and Saviour descend to improve and teach mankind, and to fit them for future happiness. A rational and conscientious government that cared for the prosperity of the people, would shew far more care and anxiety in providing proper country-schoolmasters, than in the choice of professors for Colleges and Universities. But that is not the way of the world—all strive to flatter the great and the proud, and neglect the poor and humble; and so it happens that the life of some is too hard, and of others too easy."

"But Oswald, Oswald," said Elizabeth, "you do

not know how wrong you are." But she never could explain why he was wrong.

At the approach of winter, Oswald commenced his school. The first day he placed himself at the door of his house and received the children there. If their shoes were not clean, he desired them to scrape them upon the iron at the entrance, and to wipe them with straw that they might not dirty the neat floor of the schoolroom. He then shook hands kindly with each child. If their hands were not clean, he sent them to the stream to wash them; and if their hair was not properly combed, he told them to go home and put it in order. But those who arrived clean and well-combed, he received more kindly than the others, and kissed them on the forehead. The children were greatly astonished: some were ashamed, some laughed, and some even cried, for this reception was quite new to them.

The second and third days Oswald again stood at the door of the house, and continued to do so for many days, until all the children came to school as clean as he could possibly desire. After that he received them in the schoolroom; but whoever came with dirty face and hands, or uncombed hair, or unwiped shoes, was placed upon a high stool and exposed for an hour to the derision of his companions, and then sent home to make himself clean.

Many of the parents were angry at this, but they could not prevent it, and were obliged to let Oswald have his own way; so that in a few weeks the school-

children all became wonderfully clean—at least while they were in the presence of the schoolmaster.

But Oswald was not yet satisfied ; after the children had been accustomed to this attention to personal cleanliness for about three months, he began to take notice of their clothes. No dirt or dust was allowed to be upon them, even if the clothes themselves were old and torn ; *that* he forgave, for it was not the children's fault. Whoever was the neatest and most cleanly in his appearance during the whole week, both in school and out of school, in church, in the street or in the fields, became Oswald's favourite, and received some little mark of his approbation, such as a print, a sheet of writing paper, or a little book : and the second week he obtained the envied privilege of accompanying Oswald in his Sunday walk, or if it snowed or rained, of staying with him, and looking at his great book of prints, and hearing the pretty stories he told about them. Oswald was a man who knew how to maintain his authority, even with men ; he never cursed or swore, but he feared no man. It was not then wonderful that the children soon felt the greatest veneration for him, and at last loved him, even more than their parents.

It was a pleasant sight to see with what respect they obeyed him, how eagerly they ran to meet him, how they strove to read every wish in his eyes, how his slightest sign was followed by cheerful obedience. All this was perfectly incomprehensible to the inhabitants of Goldenthal, and the more so, as the

schoolmaster made use of neither rod nor cane. Some people became anxious; and related stories of a certain rat-catcher, who also possessed the art of ensnaring children, and carried them off to a cavern in the side of a mountain, where they all disappeared together. Several old women said openly, that such influence as Oswald possessed was not acquired by fair means, and recommended taking the children away from the school; but this sage advice was not followed. It was thus Oswald expressed his ideas on this subject:

The heart's purity is the health of the soul. Cleanliness of the person is the health of the body. Beasts may roll in filth, but Man, the image of God, should strive to be pure as the Heaven to which he aspires. The commencement of all education should be, to teach a child that he is a human being, and far better than an animal. Everything may be done with a child, but little with a brute. A schoolmaster who cannot lead the tender hearts of children by kindness and determination, so that they shall follow him willingly, understands his business ill.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

## WHAT ELSE HAPPENS IN THE SCHOOL.

NEVERTHELESS, there was a great outcry in the village, many persons declaring that Oswald was perverting the children, and teaching them a new religion, and that they would learn no good from him. For it was quite wonderful how anxious all the children were to get to school, which, as in general they hate learning, certainly appeared most extraordinary and unnatural. And then the whole day they were as still in the school, as if it had been a church; when formerly, as long as any one could remember, the noise and clamour of the scholars might have been heard all through the village. Now, even during the singing lesson, the sound was only like the humming of bees. It was also whispered, that strange alterations were introduced into the manner of saying their prayers,—in short, that the children were instructed in witchcraft, and had already learnt to draw some most suspicious signs. These and other reports at last reached the ears of the clergyman, and the board of education in the capital, and, as in fact, no one knew or understood what Oswald was

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doing, in order to assist their judgments, and relieve their troubled minds, a commission of inquiry was instituted, consisting of two gentlemen from the neighbouring town, and the clergyman himself. They arrived one morning unexpectedly, before the school had commenced, and told Oswald what their object was, and that he must go through the whole business of the school, in his usual manner, in their presence.

As the children arrived one by one, although coarsely and shabbily dressed, their cleanliness and neatness were remarkable, as well as the order with which they first went and kissed the hand of the schoolmaster, and then seated themselves in their places, where they conversed gaily together, casting inquiring glances at the strangers. There were fifty-five children in all: the boys sat on one side of the room, the girls on the other.

When they were all assembled, Oswald said in an audible voice, "Dear children, let us begin by humbling ourselves before Almighty God, our Father, and offering up to Him our prayers and thanksgivings." And as he spoke, all the children joined their little hands and fell upon their knees with their eyes fixed upon the ground. Oswald knelt also; and when the clergyman and the two commissioners saw every one humble himself thus before the Eternal God, they followed the example. Then the schoolmaster read an admirable, touching prayer from a book which lay upon a desk before him—the words were so simple, that a little child could understand it,



but so eloquent that the strangers were deeply affected by it. Then the children stood up, and four of the elder ones sang from a black board covered with notes and words, with sweet and gentle voices, a beautiful morning hymn. The little ones hummed the air to themselves after them. Then the best readers read alternately a verse from the Bible, each line being repeated in an under tone by the whole school. The book was then closed, and the verses repeated first by all the children, and then by those whom Oswald selected, until the verses were thoroughly learnt by heart.

The children were now formed into four divisions and turned towards the four sides of the room, upon each of which was suspended a black board covered with large letters—on one they were single, on another in syllables, on a third in words, and on the fourth in whole phrases. All the children endeavoured to copy these in the best manner they could on slates, or with pen and ink on paper. Oswald moved about from one child to another, praised one, instructed another, shewed a third how to hold his pen, &c. After an hour, the children were formed anew into four classes, and this time there were four teachers instead of one. For those who could read best placed upon the black boards printed letters, either singly or in words or phrases, according as Oswald gave them out. The letters were cut in pasteboard, single and moveable. Oswald then examined whether all was right, and each little

schoolmaster made his scholars repeat the letters, syllables, words, and phrases in an under tone, so that no one disturbed the others. Oswald had eyes and ears for every one, and in a low voice he assisted and encouraged them all in turn.

At the end of another hour, the letters were followed by figures and sums upon the black boards under other teachers, both boys and girls. Some learnt the multiplication table, others did sums in addition, and subtraction. To the most advanced Oswald gave written questions, to which each child returned his own answer; and Oswald referring to a book containing the solutions, told them whether they were right or wrong. The stillness, the order, the anxiety of the children to learn, were truly admirable; neither the clergyman nor the commissioners had ever seen anything to equal it. After the whole morning had been employed in this manner, the children were dismissed, and taking a respectful leave of their master and the strangers, went quietly away; soon, however, the air resounded with the gay laughter and cheerful voices of these little ones.

In the afternoon the children were again collected before the black boards, some endeavouring to copy straight or waving lines, others outlines of trees, flowers, and buildings. Then the best readers read aloud entertaining and instructive tales and maxims; and it was a pleasure to see the delight and amusement of the children at all they heard. Oswald then

desired those who could write sufficiently well, to write down these stories and bring them to him the next day to see if the spelling was correct. In conclusion, Oswald announced with praise and approbation the names of those who had studied best; and as this day there happened to be six, he gave the whole school the indulgence of hearing him relate an interesting tale. He told them a story of a man, who, on a bitter cold winter's night, wearied with travelling, had lain down in the snow and fallen asleep, and was found apparently frozen to death. He was carried to a village, where the ignorant peasants would have put him into a warm room to endeavour to thaw him. However, an experienced doctor arrived, undressed the frozen man and buried him in snow from head to foot; then laid him in cold water, which froze around his limbs: he was afterwards placed in a cold bed in a room without a fire, and then rubbed incessantly with woollen cloths, until perfectly restored to life and consciousness, and Oswald explained to the children the cause of this happy result. So ended a day's schooling.

## CHAPTER IX.

## THE SUNDAY SCHOOL, AND WHAT HAPPENED AT THE MILL.

EVERY day Oswald taught the children something new, and both the commissioners and the clergyman agreed in giving him the highest praise, and allowed him to be the best schoolmaster in the country. But the inhabitants of Goldenthal could not understand this, and said one to another, "How is it possible that Oswald should teach better than the old schoolmaster, whom we had when we were young? But, without doubt, he deals in magic, and has bewitched the clergyman himself and the commissioners. All is not right about him, that's certain.

It had never been the custom in Goldenthal to keep the school open in summer, for the parents required the elder children to help them in the fields; but Oswald took the little ones, taught them for an hour or two, and then gave them something to amuse themselves with, or some trifling occupation in his garden or field, where they followed him—such as weeding, or picking up stones. When the other children saw this, they earnestly entreated him not to forget them, and he allowed them to come to him

in the evenings, and continue their studies. On Sundays and holidays, they walked with him in the fields and woods; there he taught them to distinguish all poisonous plants, and related stories to them of the dreadful accidents caused by ignorance of their dangerous properties. Sometimes he entertained them with curious anecdotes of the lives and habits of animals, both wild and domestic, and told them strange tales of distant countries and people, of mountains and caverns, of rivers and seas, and of the stars, how far they are from us, and how great they are. All this he had either seen, or learnt from books.

Now when the young men of the village heard of these things, some of them wished also to go to Oswald on Sundays, which he readily permitted, for he was grieved at their excessive ignorance. He taught them all, and gave them something to read and write in case they had any leisure hours during the week, and then examined them in it on Sundays, so that it became a regular Sunday-school, and many other young people joined it; but he rejected all those who were not perfectly clean in their persons and dress, or who frequented beer-houses, or gambled, or who cursed or swore, or were quarrelsome. He was their umpire in all disputes, and treated them as if he had been one of themselves, and they were delighted to work in his fields at their spare moments, even without his asking it.

Nevertheless, the young people who frequented Oswald's school were much laughed at by the other villa-

gers ; they called them learned men and scholars, and played them all manner of tricks. The parish officers were, in fact, glad to see Oswald and his friends persecuted, for they were afraid that he was making a party for himself, with the intention of being chosen some time or other instead of them, and they annoyed him in every possible way ; and on every occasion endeavoured to excite the peasants against him. Oswald, therefore, ceased to associate with any of them, but he went regularly to the mill, where he knew he was always welcome.


One evening when Oswald arrived at the mill, he found all his kind friends with disturbed and agitated countenances. Old Siegfried was silent and thoughtful, his wife cold and out of humour, fidgeting about the house, and banging the doors, while poor Elizabeth's eyes were red and tearful.

As soon as Oswald found himself alone with her, he exclaimed, "What can have happened ? what evil spirit has entered this house of peace ?—you all seem changed. Tell me, Elizabeth, what is the matter."

Elizabeth answered with a faltering voice, "God forgive me, Oswald ; but I must tell you. Yes, it must come out ; I am very miserable !" But she could say no more for tears and sobs, and she wept as if her heart would break. Oswald tried to console her, and in a little while she continued, "It is now above a year, Oswald, since you one day found

me in tears ; you asked me the reason, and I would not tell you. That day, Brenzel, the landlord of the Lion, had been to our house, to ask me in marriage of my parents, for his son, who has a mill of ~~his~~ own, in the village of Altenstein. My father and mother made no difficulty, for the landlord of the Lion is the richest man in the village, and the first overseer, he can do us much good or harm, and besides, my father will not hear of any one but a miller for a son-in-law. But I said that I was very young, and wished to wait a year, and they could not make me say any more. Now the year is over, and on the very day, the landlord of the Lion came again with his son. To-day they have dined with us, and my father and mother have settled everything with Brenzel, and they wanted us to be betrothed immediately. But I have declared that I will never marry, and this is my firm determination ; for young Brenzel is a wild and bad man, just like his father : this is the reason that our house is full of misery and grief."

Oswald heard all this in the greatest agitation ; he walked up and down the room for some time without speaking ; he had himself secretly indulged the hope, that Elizabeth might one day become his wife. Hastily going up to her, he said "Dearest Elizabeth—is that true—you will never marry ? If so, I too must pass my life alone, for no other wife can I ever choose but you. You have long been dearer to me than words can express, and I had hoped the



time might come when you too would love me." As he spoke, tears burst from Elizabeth's bright eyes, and she said in broken accents, "Ah, Oswald, God knows, I have loved you too much more than is right, for my father is rich, and will have such son-in-law, and he never changes his mind when he has once determined. But you know you are only a poor schoolmaster, and it will be long before you can support a wife." But Oswald pressed the weeping, trembling girl to his heart, kissed her lips, and said "Now you are my betrothed and my bride, and no power on earth can take you from me. Fear nothing, my beloved, now you belong to me alone." In a few moments, he went to look for old Siegfried and his wife, and Elizabeth heard them all talking loudly and earnestly together, but could make out nothing more; she trembled with fear, and knew not where to look for consolation in her agony; but she fell on her knees, and with uplifted hands, in the midst of the loud voices of the disputants, prayed earnestly to Heaven — the tears streaming down her cheeks, for comfort and for help, and soon her heart felt lighter. As she rose from her knees, she saw Oswald, accompanied by her father and mother leave the mill, and go towards the village. This increased her fears and doubts above measure. No one in the mill could tell her where her parents and Oswald had gone. She knew well enough that Oswald was hasty, and passionate; he might have offended or insulted her

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parents ; and they might have taken him before the justice, and the justice was the landlord of the Lion. With redoubled grief she prayed again for Oswald and for herself.

It was ten o'clock at night when she heard a noise below, and they all three returned together. Siegfried came up to his daughter, and taking her in his arms, said "Elizabeth my child, is it true that you love Oswald?" To which she replied, "Dearest father, how can I help it? you love him too, do you not?" Her parents then solemnly placed her hand in Oswald's, and gave their benediction to their children ; Elizabeth thought she was dreaming and could not for a length of time believe in the reality of her happiness.

## CHAPTER X.

## OSWALD BECOMES VERY UNPOPULAR.

WHEN, on the following Sunday, the banns of marriage were published between Oswald the schoolmaster, and Elizabeth, the miller's daughter, all the inhabitants of Goldenthal opened their eyes, and stared with astonishment. The women whispered to each other; and the landlord of the Lion walked out of church in a rage, and swore he would not rest till he had ruined the perjured miller with his whole family, including Oswald the schoolmaster; they should all be driven from the village, and sent to the House of Correction, or even to the gallows. Nevertheless, in spite of the angry Lion, the wedding of Elizabeth and Oswald was celebrated at the mill three weeks after, with great festivity and rejoicings.

As the new-married pair were returning in the evening to Oswald's house, Elizabeth turned to her husband and said, "How very happy I am! I can hardly yet believe that it is all true! And people say that there are so many miserable ill-assorted marriages! Is it possible that you or I could ever cease to love one another, and could we ever wish to be free, rather than bound together for life?"

Oswald answered, " We shall be happy during our whole lives, if we make three resolutions, and truly keep them, which will bring the blessing of God upon our union. From this day, I will live for you alone, and you for me ; we will never have the slightest secret from one another ; and if we have done wrong we will honestly confess it. Thus we shall avoid many errors and misunderstandings which often lead to grievous consequences. Secondly, we will never communicate our domestic affairs to any one. It will then be impossible for others to talk of our concerns or interfere between us. And thirdly, we will never be angry with one another, or even in joke annoy and tease each other, for out of jest often comes earnest, and what is at first said playfully, soon becomes a habit, which leads to serious quarrels. Both agreed to this, and sealed their good resolutions with a kiss : when, as they approached the house, there arose upon the stillness of the evening the sound of many sweet young voices singing in chorus. This was a little surprise which Oswald's scholars had prepared to greet his bride.—And the following morning they perceived that the house was surrounded by men, women, and children, who stood at a distance looking up and pointing to it. Oswald hastily opened the window and saw the whole front of the house beautifully ornamented with festoons and garlands of flowers, which had been done secretly by the school-children, and even the youngest had assisted in collecting flowers and green branches.

Such a thing had never been heard of before in the village of Goldenthal ; and the first day that Oswald opened his school after his marriage, all the children came each with a nosegay, as if it had been a gala day. Oswald and his young wife were much pleased at this ; it shewed good hearts, full of love and gratitude ; they kissed the children and distributed cakes among them.

In the village, however, there was a great deal of idle gossip about the marriage, and each had his own opinion on the subject. No one would believe that all was right, for it was perfectly unheard of that the richest miller in the country should give his pretty daughter and only heiress to a poor schoolmaster ! Why, Elizabeth was so rich and so beautiful, that she might even have married a nobleman. Every person tried to find out why the miller had acted so foolishly. But the miller only laughed, and they could get nothing out of him. The miller's wife, too, was terribly plagued and tormented by her neighbours about her son-in-law, and why such a daughter should have been thrown away upon a mere adventurer.

Now, the miller's wife, with all her virtues, had still a little false pride, and could not bear this contemptuous manner of speaking ; and one day that she was ready to cry with vexation, she said to the landlady of the Eagle, " Hold your foolish tongue, you know nothing at all about it. He might buy both the Lion and the Eagle himself if he chose ; he

has more than people know of; I have seen that with my own eyes. If I might speak, I could tell you things which would make you open your eyes and ears." But then she was suddenly silent, repenting that, in her anger, she had said more than she intended. So the landlady of the Eagle could learn nothing further; and was even obliged to promise that she would not repeat what she had heard. The good woman told it to no one but her husband and her sister, who also promised beforehand to keep the secret faithfully; but she repeated the words of the miller's wife so as to make it appear as if the latter had seen great heaps of silver and gold in Oswald's house, and as if he were able to buy the whole village whenever he pleased; and, moreover, that things were done in his house, that if related would make the hair upon all the heads in the village stand on end. When the landlord of the Eagle and his sister-in-law heard this, their hair did indeed stand on end from terror, and it was impossible they could do otherwise than confide the secret to a few of their most intimate friends.

In a very few days all Goldenthal knew much more than the miller's wife had said. It was clear that Oswald had dealings with the Prince of Darkness, to whom he had perhaps sold himself, and signed the bond with his blood. It was said that for thirty years the evil spirit was to obey the schoolmaster, but at the end of the last year, the devil would come and fetch away Oswald's soul after

twelve o'clock on Christmas eve; in performing which operation, he would twist the wretched man's head round till the face looked from between his shoulders ! It was also reported that the schoolmaster had as much gold as he desired ; and that he had given the pretty Elizabeth a love potion, so that she must have either died, gone mad, or married him ; and, moreover, that Oswald could raise spirits, discover hidden treasures, cure fevers, bewitch the cows, so that the milk should be half water, or even blood ; that he could command fire and water, make himself invulnerable to iron and steel ; ride through the air on a broomstick, and many more things of the same nature, that he had learnt from forbidden books, of which he had many in his possession.

From this time every one dreaded the sight of the schoolmaster ; but they took care not to offend him, as they feared some terrible vengeance of his infernal allies ; even the angry landlord of the Lion did not dare molest either him or the miller ; and many people crossed themselves secretly if they encountered Oswald unexpectedly.

## CHAPTER XI.

## ELIZABETH MAKES MANY FRIENDS.

BUT when the young men of the village met Elizabeth blooming like a rose, they did not cross themselves or avoid her, but readily wished her good morning; for Elizabeth was a handsome woman, and seemed to become more so every day, and indeed the other women in Goldenthal were obliged to own it. Nevertheless, she was not dressed more finely or expensively than they were. But meet her when you would, Sundays or work days, morning or evening, she was always as neat as if she were going to a dance. She worked in the fields, or in the garden in the heat of the sun; she took care of the cow and the pigs, carried eggs and vegetables to the town to sell, and yet was always clean and tidy, without a spot upon her clothes.

"I declare I almost believe that she is a witch herself!" said the landlady of the Lion, taking a pinch of snuff, and wiping her nose with her sleeve.

"Yes, yes," said all the young men, "no doubt she is. If Elizabeth were not already married, she would bewitch us all, she is so lovely!"

The married men often found fault with their wives for not remaining as pretty as they had been ; and reproached them with not looking as well as the schoolmaster's wife ; while the women abused and slandered her who was the cause of these complaints. But one day two girls who had formerly been the friends of Elizabeth, and who were very willing to be married themselves, came to her and said, " How is it that you have now been married above a year, and are prettier than ever ? Dear Elizabeth, do tell us how you contrive it ; for in general, you know, when a girl marries, she soon becomes ugly and slovenly, and her husband loves her no longer. But that is not the case with you."

The young wife answered, " I will tell you the reason ; it is chiefly the women's fault. As long as they are unmarried, and wish to please, they dress themselves well, and all their earnings are spent in clothes ; they are neat and clean ; their hair well combed, and their gowns well made and put on. But when they have once got a husband, they care no more about it, and no longer seek to please him ; they go about with uncombed hair and curl-papers, and, however dirty and slovenly they may appear, persuade themselves that it looks as if they were good housewives, and had not time to attend to dress. They say they must save money, and can no longer spend it, as before, in finery. When a gown is old and dirty, it costs too much to replace it ; and then, they cannot make it themselves ; they have never



learnt ; so they get accustomed to rags and dirt, and the woman herself becomes changed from neglect and carelessness. No wonder if she is soon an object of indifference, or even of disgust to her husband ; and then come misery and distress into the house."

The young girls said, "Elizabeth, you are very right." "When I married Oswald," she went on to say, "I reflected much how it would be possible for me to continue to please him, for I loved him dearly, and I determined to be still more careful of my person than formerly, and never to appear before him in an untidy dress. I took the greatest care of my clothes ; I kept my kitchen, my cellar, my stable as clean as my parlour. The smallest speck on my furniture must be instantly removed. So did everything about me remain new and fresh, and I myself have continued so in his eyes." "But," said the girls, "the neatest gown will wear out at last, and how is a new gown to be got, if the husband gives no money ?"

Elizabeth answered, "I require less money for clothes than others do, for I take care to mend the very smallest hole, before it becomes larger, which costs nothing but needles and thread ; but when a small hole is neglected, it soon becomes a large one, the whole gown goes to pieces, and a new one must be bought, while I can still wear my old one, and save my husband's money. Those women who do not know how to sew and mend, spend much more, and are never fit to be seen." At these words, the two girls coloured, and with tears in their eyes, said,

"We have never been taught to sew and mend as you have; we shall regret it much when we marry, it will cause us much sorrow, but what can we do?" and they went sadly away.

Elizabeth repeated to her husband the conversation she had had with her friends, and said she would teach them both to knit and sew, for she pitied the poor girls, and would gladly be of use to them.

Oswald pressed his excellent wife to his heart, and said, "You will be a blessing to me, and bring the blessing of God upon this house! Teach not only these two girls, but all who are willing to learn of you; many families in this village are poor and miserable, though the men work very hard, because the women are bad managers and ignorant. Their gardens are neglected, while if they planted a few wholesome vegetables, it would make a variety in their food. If they wish to make a good dish, they add fat, grease, and lard, all things which cost much, and are unwholesome. Bad food makes bad blood, then comes illness and all its expenses, and sick men cannot work. It is the same thing with clothing. To be sure there are sempstresses in the village, but as they gain their bread by needlework, of course they will not teach others. It is a great pity that there is not in every village, some respectable woman who understands cooking and gardening, sewing and washing, and would teach it all to the peasant girls; it would add greatly to their comfort and usefulness, and make them good and happy

wives ; go then, dear Elizabeth, begin your labour of love, and merit the thanks and blessings of your neighbours." And joyfully did Elizabeth commence her undertaking. Every day, whenever she had a moment's leisure, she taught her two friends to sew, to mend, and darn so neatly, that the place could hardly be discovered. She shewed them how to cut out clothes to the greatest advantage, with the least waste of material, and to knit stockings. She took them all round the house, into the cellar and the out-houses ; everything was in its right place, and whoever used it, took care to restore it, and as all was in perfect order, and kept constantly so, there was never a great deal to do. In the garden, she shewed them how to sow and plant vegetables, when they were fit to gather, how to keep them, and make them useful in cooking. In the kitchen she taught them to dress plain and wholesome dishes, and to make the most of everything without waste and extravagance ; they learnt to roast meat, and to make soup, besides preparing vegetables and fruit for winter use, all of which, Elizabeth had learnt from her mother.

The two girls were astonished, for they had never seen their mothers do anything of the kind, and they rejoiced much, that if they should marry, they would be able to feed their husbands well, without spending more than others did ; when they told other girls all that they had learnt from the school-master's wife, and how much they wished to be like her, they came one after another to Elizabeth, and

begged her to teach them also, till at last it became a regular school. For as all the young men praised Elizabeth, so all the young women wished to imitate her.

Oswald's wife had trouble enough at first ; but she soon found that she derived much benefit from her new undertaking. Every one was ready to help her in her garden and farmyard ; some cooked for her, and others mended the linen. The following year the good effects of her instructions were visible in many little gardens in the village, which were neat, and in a high state of cultivation ; and one neighbour would watch another and see what she planted and sowed, and beg for seeds and cuttings. As the summer and autumn advanced, many of the peasants' wives had an abundance of fine vegetables which they sold in the town, and brought back hard money, to their great joy and satisfaction. While those who had none went also to Elizabeth and asked her what to do. And she gave them good advice and taught them all that she knew. She did this willingly, for she was truly kind-hearted ; and besides, good words cost nothing, particularly to young women. Thus the schoolmaster's wife was universally beloved, and every one was anxious to oblige her ; besides, they pitied the poor pretty creature with such a husband as Oswald, who it was clear, could never hope to be saved, for it was well known that he was a magician who dealt in the black art, and was eternally lost, both body and soul.

## CHAPTER XII.

THE LANDLORD OF THE LION SETS OUT UPON A JOURNEY,  
AND WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM.

OSWALD might do what he would, he was always sure to be blamed. When he taught the children that there were no such things as ghosts, and that only timid or superstitious people believed in them, then it was said that he believed neither in God nor the devil. If he shewed them the poisonous plants in the forests, or on the mountain side, to prevent their eating berries and roots which might injure them, the villagers said he was teaching them to make poisonous draughts. Brenzel, the landlord of the Lion, in particular, watched all his actions, and carefully treasured up every word that was said against him. When at last he thought he had collected enough to be the ruin of Oswald, he said to himself, "Now I shall be revenged! Oswald shall go before a magistrate, and his own mother-in-law, the miller's wife, shall be forced to confess what she knows about him. As overseer of the parish, it is my duty to speak—I cannot suffer this to go on any longer without being myself to blame." So one fine

day he put on his Sunday clothes, placed his three-cornered hat majestically upon his head, took his Spanish cane with the silver knob, left the village, and with solemn steps took the road to the capital. But he told no one what he meant to do, and that he hoped to get Oswald into disgrace with the Government, for he feared that should it reach the ears of this dreaded magician, he might play him some terrible trick, even before he reached the town.

And as he was walking alone in the high road, he spoke aloud as he intended to do in the presence of the magistrates; and the more he talked, the faster he walked, gesticulating first with one hand, then with another, as if he were a stage-player. But in the midst of his zeal and eagerness, he stumbled over his long stick which got between his legs, and threw him at full length upon the ground. Away flew his hat, down went his head, and up went his legs, as if he were trying to stand upon his head. With many groans and lamentations he contrived to get upon his feet again, and pick up his hat out of the dust; but alas! his nose was bleeding, and he had a lump on his forehead as big as an egg: "There!" he cried, "This is that villain Oswald's doing!" and he hardly dared proceed for fear of worse misfortunes. Whilst he was wiping the blood from his face, a man on horseback, his hat and coat covered with gold lace, came galloping down the road. He stopped before the landlord of the Lion, and hastily asked him, "Pray, does a person of the name of

Oswald live in that village, and is he likely to be at home?"

Brenzel answered, "Yes; but why do you want to know?"

"The Prince wishes to pay him a visit," said the stranger, and hastened on towards Goldenthal. The landlord of the Lion remained immovable, his mouth wide open and speechless with astonishment. At last he stammered out, "What! what! the Prince—a Prince visit Oswald!" as he said these words, a splendid carriage with six horses, and servants before and behind passed him at full gallop. Inside sat a young man with a shining star upon his breast. The carriage went on towards Goldenthal.

"The devil's in it," exclaimed Brenzel, "the Prince will certainly stop at my house; and if I am not at home he will go to the Eagle." Brenzel ran back to the village as fast as he could—he forgot the long stick, which once more got between his legs, and threw him again on the ground; he thought every bone in his body was broken, and his holiday suit was in a woeful plight. He limped back, cursing and swearing: but when he saw no carriage standing before his door, he was ready to expire with envy and jealousy, for he thought that the Prince must have stopped at Kindeman's, the landlord of the Eagle. He went into his own house and found not a soul there; he changed his clothes, and was shocked when he saw his scratched and swollen face in the looking-glass, though the glass was so dirty that there

was not much to be seen in it. Then he began to call in no very gentle tones for his people, all of whom had run out to see the sight. At last, the maid came panting and screaming, "Sir, sir, there is a live emperor, or at least a king, at the schoolmaster's house. The whole village is collected before his door."

Brenzel did not know what to do, but he at last joined the people assembled before the schoolmaster's house. In about half an hour the Prince came to the door, having Oswald and Elizabeth on each side of him, and speaking to them kindly and familiarly. Before he got into the carriage he shook hands with both, and then set off at full gallop — out-riders before and behind. All the peasants standing with their hats in their hands, and their mouths wide open with astonishment.

It was now whispered all through the village that the schoolmaster knew more secrets than one. No Prince comes to a village schoolmaster merely to pay him a visit; and it was said that it was not without reason that he appeared so kind and friendly to him. Great people want much money, and must sometimes have dealings with those who possess the art of making gold, and who can find hidden treasures. This and other such wise observations went round the village and filled the heads of many of its ignorant and ragged inhabitants. Some were more explicit, and said one to another, "If I only knew how to set to work, I would make no difficulties



about it. I would sell myself to the devil if I could be sure of having my debts paid, and plenty of money to spend as I please. I would act very differently from the schoolmaster. What a fool he must be to live among us, as he does—I would drive six horses like the Prince, and have stars and servants without numbers, and would have my kitchen full of meat, and my cellar full of wine. I am ready enough to sell my soul for all this." Such language was held by these foolish men without shame or compunction. Riches corrupt the heart, but poverty does so still more ; and when poverty, ignorance, and evil passions combine, the results are fearful. This is the case in many villages ; and so, alas ! was it in Goldenthal.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## THE GOLDMAKERS' LEAGUE.

OSWALD could not at all understand why, shortly after the Prince's visit, there came to him first one person, then another, desiring to speak with him privately, and all of them expressing themselves in the following silly and wicked manner: "Oswald, every one in the village knows that you can make gold—teach me your secret, you understand the magic art. If the devil should appear, I would not be frightened. If he should even require the compact to be signed with my blood, I am ready to give myself to him, body and soul. I would not do it, but I am in great distress." For a long time Oswald did not know how to treat such absurd folly; but as the numbers increased that came to see him, and he could not get rid of them by any means, he at last thought of an expedient, and desired each person separately to come to him at twelve o'clock the same night.

They began to arrive stealthily, one by one, as he had desired them, soon after the village clock had struck eleven. Oswald conducted every person silently into a dark room. There were two-and-thirty

heads of families, and each man was almost frightened out of his wits, when in the dark he touched one of the others, and discovered that there was something alive near him ; for no one knew the others were coming. Some shuddered and wiped the perspiration from their brows, whilst many were so alarmed that they would have given the world to run away ; but they feared the evil spirit might do them some mischief if they attempted it, and they trembled for their lives should they offend him. They remained for nearly an hour in perfect silence, and overcome with terror, scarcely daring to breathe. Suddenly the clock struck twelve ; with the last stroke the doors were thrown open, and an officer walked into the room dressed in full uniform, a feather in his hat, a sword by his side, and a star upon his breast ; he had two lighted tapers in his hands, which he placed upon the table before him. And now, when each person recognised his neighbour, they were thoroughly ashamed of themselves, for they saw plainly that every one had come with the same object. And, when they looked again at the splendid officer, whom they had taken for the evil one *in propria persona*, they were astonished to see it was Oswald himself.

But Oswald was very serious, and said, " Look at me, unhappy men, and learn to know me better. I deal in no forbidden arts. I endeavour to serve my God, but it is you who have fallen off from Him. You have drank and rioted ; you have cursed and swore ; you have robbed and cheated ; you have

wasted your property, and neglected your wives and children ; these are the works of the devil, and it is you who have had dealings with him. It is this which makes you poor and wretched. Honesty is ever the best policy ; and the fear of God brings prosperity. I do not wish to be rich, but I am not poor. If you would be like me, you must act as I do."

Oswald then drew a large purse from his pocket and poured out its contents ; there came numbers of bright gold coins, ringing upon the table, rolling about, and dazzling their eyes. These peasants had never in their lives seen so much gold at once ; their hearts beat, and their mouths watered. But Oswald continued : " I solemnly assure you that it is not this gold that gives me happiness, but it is the knowledge which enables me to earn it, and make a good use of it. You came to me to learn the art of making gold. The art I will teach you is the best kind of knowledge, and worth much more than gold itself. If you once possess it you will have riches also, and without esteeming them too highly. But you cannot obtain this blessing without undergoing a severe trial, and that trial shall last seven years and seven weeks ! Whoever sustains it to the end will have secured his happiness for the rest of his life. And I assure you that at the expiration of the time, every one of you will be able to lay more gold upon his table than you see now upon mine. The ordeal will be severe for the weak or wicked man, for he must change his whole heart and begin an entirely new life."

The men looked at Oswald with increasing astonishment, and listened in perfect silence to his words.

"Whoever among you," he continued, "is willing to undergo the seven years and seven weeks of trial, may remain. Whoever is afraid, or does not believe me, must depart."

No one stirred. "Well, then," cried Oswald, "you must swear before Almighty God to keep these seven vows unbroken during seven whole years:—

"1st. For seven years and seven weeks, you must go regularly to church, and listen to the word of God and obey it. Morning and evening, with your wives and children, you must pray to God to pardon your sins.

"2nd. For seven years and seven weeks you must never enter an alehouse: you must never touch either cards or dice, or play at any game for money.

"3rd. For seven years and seven weeks no oath or swearing may pass your lips, neither may you indulge in evil speaking or lying.

"4th. For seven years and seven weeks you must work hard all day, actively and diligently; and above all, you must incur no fresh debts.

"5th. Whoever gets drunk once during the seven years and seven weeks is rejected from our community.

"6th. There must be no weeds on your land, no dirt in your houses. Your outhouses, your cattle-sheds, and your implements must be remarkable for cleanliness; by this I shall know that you are one of us.

"7th. Your behaviour must ever be modest and becoming; your persons cleanly, your skin, hair, and clothes free from all impurities. This shall be our distinguishing signs; whoever will swear to keep these seven vows, let him come forward and give me his hand. The strong shall help the weak."

When Oswald had ceased speaking, the two and thirty men came forward, one after another, and each gave him his hand across the table, and said "I swear!" Now go home in peace, and before you lie down pray to God to give you strength to keep your vows; and I say it again, that if they are truly kept, each of you will see more gold in his house than now dazzles his eyes here. He then desired them not to mention to any one what they had seen and heard that night; and not even to speak of it or allude to it among themselves.

They left him in solemn silence, not a word was spoken on their way home; they were full of the wonderful things which they had seen and heard: they had expected something very different: indeed the very opposite of what had occurred; and many, when they reflected on the vows they had taken, felt sad and oppressed, for they were very strict. But the secrecy—the seven years and seven weeks—Oswald's solemn language—the table heaped with gold—the splendid officer with the order on his breast, and the dark midnight hour,—all this could not be forgotten, and remained like the memory of a strange dream.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## THE ASTONISHMENT OF THE GOLDENTHALERS.

"WHAT is the matter, Walter?—Caspar, what are you about?" said the lame old watchman, as he passed through the village the next day; "what can have happened? Is another prince or king coming, or some great man from the capital, that you are cleaning every thing in this manner?"

But he asked in vain, they only laughed at him. Nevertheless, many men were hard at work; and there were strange doings in some houses. The windows were cleaned, the floors scoured, doors and tables washed, cupboard and benches dusted. Everything was put in order; all rubbish discarded; dirt removed, and each article placed where it ought to be kept. The two and thirty heads of families understood it well enough, but said nothing. They thought to themselves "In seven years we shall have chests full of gold!" When Oswald saw all these poor people so busy, he said to Elizabeth, "Really I know not whether to laugh or cry when I look at them. For that which they would not do from their own sense of right and wrong, from the love of God, or from affection

for their wives and children, they are now doing from superstitious fear and love of riches. How foolish are the children of men! But their superstition itself shall lead them to a knowledge of the truth, and even through their corruption they shall be led to virtue." However, the amazement of the other villagers increased daily; the public houses were almost deserted, especially on Sundays; no loud oaths were heard, or fighting or quarrelling. Scarcely a man touched either cards or dice. The landlords of the public houses complained that the beer turned sour, for hardly anybody drank it; and there was still less brandy or spirits consumed. Most of the men passed their evenings at home with their families, or walked about their fields, examining what could be done to improve them. Those who formerly passed their whole time in dissipation and rioting, had now become serious and thoughtful; those who seldom spoke without an oath were now well behaved and quiet, while those who before had been loitering about doing nothing from morning till night, were now diligent at their work, and remarkable for their activity.

But when the landlord of the Eagle saw all his tables and benches unoccupied on a Sunday, he fell into a tremendous rage, and one day he burst forth, "Are all the people gone out of their senses? What the devil is come to them! things can never go on in this way; it is quite shameful."

His friend Brenzel answered: "If this fashion continues I shall be obliged to shut up my house. But I



understand it ; it is a scandalous plot against me ; they want to ruin me ; but there shall be an end of the village first ! If I could but make out who is the cause of all this mischief !” The landlord of the Eagle, in order to get rid of his sour beer, sold it at half price, and mixed drugs with his wine to make it taste better ; and every Sunday he hired musicians to play before his door. But none of the two and thirty goldmakers, or their sons and daughters, ever entered his house.

The landlord of the Lion tried also to attract his former customers ; he was extremely civil, offered them beer and spirits, and if when he asked “ Why do you not come and drink at my house ? ” they answered “ Because we have no money,” he would say “ Nonsense ! you know well enough I am not hard upon you, and give credit willingly ; we are old friends ! ” But still they did not come.

Then the landlord of the Lion went into a rage and said, “ If you treat me thus, you shall feel the Lion’s teeth ; you shall know what it is to injure Brenzel the Lion ! ”

## CHAPTER XV.

OSWALD INQUIRES ABOUT THEIR DEBTS.—THE SAVINGS-BANK  
AND THE SOUP KITCHEN.

It often happened that some of the poor men who belonged to the Goldmakers' league came secretly to Oswald to complain of their great distress, saying, "You see, Oswald, I keep my vows, however difficult it may be. I have worked hard for the last half year; during that time I have neither drank, swore, nor fought. My wife and children, as well as my house, are clean. No one has any reason to complain of me. Yet the parish-officers annoy me terribly. I am in debt to all of them; and they threaten to turn me out of my house unless I pay them, or go on increasing my debt by drinking at their houses. If you do not help me I shall not be able to keep my vows. In six years and a half I shall have plenty of money. Lend me a small sum, and then I will repay you. But Oswald answered, "The first, and fourth vows says, *Pray, work, make no debts*. I must not lend you money; but tell me how much you owe, and to whom, and then we will see what can be done." And he took pen, ink, and paper, and wrote

the answers which every man made to the following questions:—"To whom are you in debt? How much, and at what interest? For what purpose was the money borrowed, and did you give any security?" As soon as he knew the whole amount of each man's debt, he asked, "How do you expect to pay? How much do you and your wife and children earn in the week? How much land and stock have you, and what do they produce on an average? How do you and your family live? What does your food cost you a-week or a-day? Are you well provided with clothes, furniture, &c.? And what chance have you of being able to save money?" All this was carefully written down, and now, for the first time, their disorderly and improvident manner of living was brought clearly to light. Many persons did not even know how much they owed, and had no papers or means of ascertaining it. For these it was necessary to have recourse to the creditors. Some had not paid the interest of their debts for three or four years; this was the first thing to be attended to. Others had to pay eight, ten, or even twelve per cent for money which, in moments of great distress, they had borrowed from the parish-officers. Oswald lost no time, but obtained money in the capital at three or four per cent, upon good security, and paid off the usurers, so that they should no longer have the power of ruining these poor men by the excessive interest they required. Some had more debts than property; and it was difficult to know how to assist them. But

Oswald encouraged them all, and said, "With the help of God, hard work, and strict economy, you will at last be free from debt. Only follow my advice carefully in every respect."

Now, indeed, these poor people became fully aware of the extent of their own folly and imprudence; and when many of them discovered that the whole of their little property would not suffice for the payment of the debts they had so improvidently incurred, great, in truth, was their dismay and sorrow. All were ready to work, all wished to save, but they knew not how to begin. Oswald encountered difficulties of every description in his efforts to assist them, but he was a true philanthropist, and did not suffer himself to be discouraged. He gave each man a book containing a list of his debts and household expenses, shewing him the exact state of his own affairs. He went to the town and endeavoured to find work for every one—men, women, and children; in this he succeeded by degrees. Whatever they received as wages was written down in the book, and if anything could be spared from their weekly expenses, it was given into Oswald's hands, to form by degrees a small capital of which they could dispose. Oswald had very soon above a hundred florins belonging to them, and this he determined also to turn to some account; "For," said he, "why should this money lie idle? if we could obtain interest even for this small sum it would help to diminish their debts." So he wrote down the amount of whatever had been

entrusted to him, and placed in his savings-bank. He then went to the town and found an honest man, who agreed to take every month whatever money was saved by these hard-working people, even if it amounted only to ten or twenty florins, and to pay a moderate interest for it. It was a rich merchant who received the money, and as he was ready to assist in any good work, at the end of the year the interest was added to the capital ; Oswald keeping a written account of how much interest was due to each individual. As fortunately these poor people had now obtained employment, they were able to labour hard, and there was scarcely any sickness among them. Formerly that was not the case ; for when they were drunk on Sunday, they were unable to go to work on Monday, and were ill and useless : besides, their health was much improved by greater attention to cleanliness, for many disorders are but the natural consequences of dirt and neglect.

When Oswald explained to the Goldmakers that he had established a species of savings-bank, and that the money which they brought him to take care of produced interest, they were struck with astonishment and delight ; and each examined the book to see how much money he had already deposited, and how much more he might expect at the end of the year. At first, but few had brought their money to Oswald ; but, when one man found that another had already placed fifteen, twenty, or thirty florins, they were angry with themselves, and anxious to

do the same, and each brought his savings to Oswald, saying, "Why did you not tell me of the savings-bank?—take the little money I can save; for, if I keep it at home, far from increasing it will diminish. If I have money at hand, I shall spend it;—out of sight, out of mind. If you do not take it, I shall be long enough before I can think of paying my debts." So they brought him every week whatever they could spare from their wages, some working harder than others, to have something to put into the savings-bank; and many became so stingy, that they almost starved their families in order to have more money to lay by. This displeased the school-master, who said, "However right it is to be economical, you must not let your children starve: whoever is well fed has more strength and courage to work. It is true, many women, who are quite strong enough to work in the fields, and earn money, are now obliged to lose their time at home, in order to attend to the cooking. If there were a public kitchen, where the food for each household could be prepared, there would be a great saving of fuel, and so much time would not be lost in collecting it in the forest. In times of scarcity, we have been contented with very scanty food; why were we so ready to save then, when we had nothing, and will not save now, when we have something to spare? Potatoes, fruit, corn, bread, and meat are now cheap; and, with the same money, we can live better than during the famine, and yet save something. If one woman were

to cook for all, much time would be gained, and you would be able to earn money in other ways. It would require twenty times as much fuel daily for thirty saucepans or kettles, as it would to dress the food of thirty families in one large cauldron; and where a great quantity of food is dressed at once, there is great economy in salt, butter, and many other ingredients, besides the wear and tear of cooking utensils. You can understand this, and see that much could be saved by these means. Let us make a trial." Many were willing, while others objected to making the attempt. Oswald went to the miller, and persuaded him to establish a soup-kitchen, where meat should also be dressed three times a-week. Those who agreed to join in the experiment, told him about what quantity of soup and meat they required daily, and they began with seventeen families. It was arranged that each household should in turn provide the fuel for cooking, and a woman to assist: the miller's wife had the superintendence of everything. Each day there was some variety in the soup or vegetables. Those who had no money paid for their portions of soup with honey, fruit, or potatoes; but whoever had meat must pay for it in money. The miller's wife understood cooking well; and the peasants' wives and daughters, when their turn came to assist, learnt a great deal from her.

By this means, all these families, as well as the schoolmaster and the miller, who had joined them, lived cheaper and better than any others in the vil-

lage : every day they had soup and vegetables, and, three times a week, meat dressed in various ways. When the others saw this, and that the soup was not poor meagre stuff, but fit for hard-working people, who required good nourishment, as well as for the sick and ailing, they were eager to partake of it : and many did so, even without belonging to the Goldmakers' league ; for they saw clearly that much fuel, time, and trouble in cooking were saved, and good food obtained much more cheaply. At last, there were more customers than the miller's wife could provide for, though she had fresh assistants every day. So the landlord of the Eagle established a public kitchen in his own house ; but all who belonged to the Goldmakers' league continued to frequent the miller's. They had chosen the most respectable people among them to purchase the provisions, and superintend their distribution ; for the advantages of doing so were not to be confined to one individual, but shared among all.



## CHAPTER XVI.

THE NUMBER OF PUBLIC-HOUSES DIMINISH, AND WHAT THE  
OLD PEASANTS SAY ABOUT IT.

AFFAIRS went on very differently in the kitchen at the Eagle : there the soup was so bad that no one could eat it ; so the customers were few, as they would not pay their money for such stuff. They joined together, and endeavoured to manage as well as the miller's wife ; but they did not succeed, for there was no order, and each tried to cheat the other. The landlord of the Eagle laughed at them, and rejoiced to see that others succeeded no better than himself. He was, however, worse off than others, for he was a hard-hearted bad man ; he had accumulated much money by dishonest means, but ill-gotten wealth never thrives. When, during the scarcity, a subscription had been raised in the capital for the poor Goldenthalers, instead of establishing a kitchen, and dividing the food among them, he persuaded the other overseers to give each man his share of money. He and the landlord of the Lion then joined together, and sold them corn and flour at an exorbitant price, and thus all the money returned

into their own pockets ; and when the poor peasants were driven by want to sell their hay, cattle, and farming implements by auction, these men united to exclude competition, and obtain everything far beneath its value. They first offered very small sums ; and then, adding a little, one after another withdrew, and would bid no more, saying, it was too much, and the goods were not worth it. When they had said this, as they were considered the best judges, nobody ventured to offer more ; so that they got the things almost for nothing. But if any one happened to know better, and offered a larger sum, they soon frightened him away, particularly if he owed them anything, saying, " If you have money enough to buy these worthless goods, and can outbid me and my friend, you had better set about paying your own debts."

Thus spoke the landlord of the Eagle, a proud, harsh man, who was always quarrelling, and at law with some one or other. He had even a law-suit with his own brothers and sisters, whom he had endeavoured to cheat in the division of his father's property ; and he had completely ruined many of his neighbours, by going to law with them upon the slightest offence : in fact, the litigious spirit of the Goldenthalers was the chief cause of their poverty. As long as they possessed anything, they were proud of being engaged in a law-suit, believing it was something grand and honourable, which made them of importance in the eyes of others. Then came cun-

ning advocates and attorneys, who worked upon the folly of these peasants, and were very willing to profit by it. By their means, these lovers of law were induced to risk everything belonging to them upon the chances of a suit, swearing they would rather a thousand times lose all than give in. This just suited the lawyers, who employed every means, year after year, to prolong the causes. There were appeals, and writs of error, and adjournments, and every trick and quibble to get the money of these poor simple people, till the business had cost them ten times as much as it was originally worth. He who lost his cause then accused the judge of partiality, and had nothing left for it, but to suck his paws, while the lawyers ate and drank merrily upon his spoils.

Since Oswald's arrival, he had prevailed on many of his neighbours to refrain from this passion for litigation. If any of them came to consult him, he contrived that the affair should be amicably settled; and one day, he told them the following fable: "Two dogs met once upon a bridge over a brook, and found there a piece of meat. They began to fight for it: a third dog, who would have been glad enough to get it, came up and whispered first to one, then to the other, 'Never give in; it is you who have a right to it;' so they went on quarrelling and tearing one another to pieces in the scuffle, till they both fell into the water; then the third quietly ate up the meat, admiring all the time, how well the others swam. This is the way with those who delight in lawsuits.

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“It is very expensive to be always stickling for our rights, and it sometimes brings both ridicule and disgrace; villanous lawyers are like the two sides of a pair of scissors, they unite merely to destroy whatever is put between them. Even those who gain a lawsuit, often lose far more than they can ever recover in time and labour, besides the injury to their health, for they are sure to suffer from grief, anxiety, fear and sleepless nights.

The landlord of the Eagle never consulted Oswald, or attended to his words, but had almost every year a fresh lawsuit. He was nearly ruined by law expenses, continual journeys, and incessant presents to lawyers, and lawyers' clerks. He was now in the greatest distress, for he had just lost a suit against a neighbouring parish, about an old oak tree, which he maintained stood upon his land, and did not belong to the parish. This oak had cost him above a thousand florins, and he knew not where to find the money, for he was more in debt than any one suspected. As he was always trying to borrow from anybody who would trust him, those to whom he was already indebted became alarmed, and demanded immediate payment, and having no means of satisfying them, he was forced to sell his house and land, and make over the whole property to his creditors. This was the consequence of his passion for lawsuits! As his fields had been ill cultivated, they brought a low price, and as people no longer frequented the alehouses (either because they had no

money, or would not spend it in that way), even the sale of his house and licence produced but little; and when the purchaser saw that his house was deserted, and that he was losing money, he gave up the whole concern. So now, the only public house that remained was the Lion, for all the others had been shut up by degrees, when they were found to be no longer profitable. Some of the old peasants shook their heads, saying, "These are bad times: it is very clear our poor village is going to rack and ruin. Formerly, three inns, besides beerhouses, were not enough for us, and now there is scarcely employment for one! What a disgrace to Goldenthal! what will become of us!" But Oswald said, "Be not afraid, my friends; I, on the contrary, begin now to hope that better times are approaching. I have travelled much, and in all the towns and villages I have visited, I have remarked, that wherever there were many public houses, there was much poverty, and where there was only an inn for travellers, there was far greater comfort to be found in the cottages.

"It is not without reason that landlords generally paint some bird or beast of prey upon their signs, a lion or an eagle, a bear or a falcon, for truly they prey upon the whole community. They hang out a golden cross, because *they* will have gold, and leave *you* crosses and grief; they exhibit a golden angel, but in fact it is an angel of darkness, that only serves to fill the prison and the workhouse. Although there is but one alehouse, we have still too many;

without it, how much more comfortable would your homes become !

“He who does not spend his money at cards and dice, can afford to buy himself a Bible and Prayer-book ; he who does not get a headache by drinking and carousing, will make his own fireside cheerful and happy : he will always have money in his purse ; and it is better to drink one jug of home-brewed ale, than a whole hogshead at a public house !”

When Oswald spoke thus, the old peasants nodded their heads in token of approbation ; they saw well enough that he was in the right ; but the landlord of the Lion was very indignant, especially when he heard that the Golden Lion had been called a beast of prey, and he was much tempted to bring an action for defamation against Oswald, if he could find an opportunity. But the schoolmaster was cautious, and kept out of the way of the raging lion, leaving him to scold and grumble as he pleased.

## CHAPTER XVII.

THE PARSONAGE IS STRUCK BY LIGHTNING.—A NEW  
CLERGYMAN.

ONE night, about this time, there was a very dreadful storm. The whole heavens were a sheet of fire. The thunder rolled, the houses shook, and the windows rattled; even those villagers who lived the year round without thought or prayer, now threw themselves on their knees, and prayed loudly, and lamented their sins from their hearts, as long as the storm lasted. That over, they no doubt returned to their former practices; suddenly, with a fearful crash and roar, the lightning struck the village, and fell like a sea of flame, upon the parsonage house. Fortunately it did not catch fire, and no one appeared to be hurt; but the following morning, the roof was discovered to be entirely torn away, and the poor old clergyman was so dreadfully terrified that he never recovered it, and died in a few days.

As usual, the Goldenthalers laid all the fault upon the government, saying, "The magistrates are the cause of this misfortune. If they had not forbidden the bells to be rung during a storm, this would

never have happened. Formerly, when there was a tempest, we could ring till it was over ; now, that is forbidden. There is no longer any religion, and this is the consequence !” So reasoned the Goldenthalers ; but Oswald said, “ Why are your hearts so full of folly, and why do your mouths speak such wickedness ? It is not the government which has brought down the lightning upon the roof of the parsonage, but the metal knob upon the iron weathercock. For it is the property of lightning to be attracted by a metal point. God has made it thus, that man may learn from thence, how to preserve himself from its power. As soon as the lightning has found any metal which it can follow to the earth, it is no longer dangerous.” He then took some of the villagers out upon the roof of the parsonage house, and shewed them small holes melted in the metal knob, and how the lightning had run along the iron nails which fastened the tiles on the roof, until it reached a wire that communicated with the bell at the house door ; as soon as the electric fluid had found this iron path to the ground, the rest of the house was safe, as the peasants now perceived, and they understood that, without it, the mischief done might have been much greater. Oswald also told them, that church towers were often struck by lightning, because they had high spires, and contained much iron work ; and as it had often happened, that men had been struck dead while ringing the bells during a storm, the government had put a stop to that useless and superstitious practice. Oswald



was sorry, however, to perceive that, after this conversation, more people were afraid of lightning than before; and he again explained to them that although it was difficult to prevent some feeling of alarm during a violent storm, yet that storms themselves should be regarded as proofs of the mercy of the Almighty, who sends them to purify the air, and make the earth fruitful. "Cease then to fear," said he; "place an iron rod a few feet high upon the roofs of your houses; fasten an iron wire about as thick as a quill to it, and carry the wire down to the ground, which it should touch in a damp place; you will then have made a path for the lightning, which it will follow without injuring anything, till it reaches the earth, provided the wire is uninterrupted from one end to the other, and is kept free from rust and dirt. Such a conductor is a certain preservative from all danger of lightning." And as Elizabeth was terribly afraid of storms, Oswald immediately placed an iron rod, with a wire reaching to the ground, on the top of his own house; and the miller, who had often seen it in towns, did so likewise. Many of the villagers followed their example, for it cost but little, and made them feel secure.

But others were very angry with them, saying, "Is not this interfering with, and giving laws to, the Almighty? Cannot he strike whom he pleases with his lightning? May not the number of points drive away the fruitful showers, and bring us noxious vapours?"

Oswald, however, answered indignantly, "Ye fools ! do not the rains of heaven fall equally upon the thousand tops of the trees of the forest, and upon the smooth surface of the plain ? and does not the will of the Almighty guide the lightning, whether it falls on an iron point, the summit of the oak, or in the water ? But God gave us foresight that we might provide against the evils which even the most precious of his gifts may sometimes bring with them. Fire, light, and warmth, are excellent things ; but not when a house is burning. Therefore God gave us water to extinguish fire. If you employ water for this purpose, why should you hesitate to use iron to avert the dangers of lightning ? There is no evil in the world against which God has not given us some means of defence. Man ought thankfully to acknowledge this ; and he who blindly and obstinately neglects these means, despises God's best gifts, and has but his deserts if his house is burnt down, or himself struck dead by lightning."

Some thought all this very rational, but others—and these were the timid and self-sufficient—would not allow that the schoolmaster knew more of the matter than they did ; in fact, they were ashamed of their ignorance, but were determined not to confess it.

It was not long before the place of the old clergyman was filled up. His successor was a young man about seven and twenty years of age, named Roderick.

"Well," cried some of the peasants when he first arrived in the village, "what good can this boy do

us? If the government has no religion, it might at least leave us ours, and send us a respectable and experienced man." Others said "Our clergyman is one of the new sort. God preserve us! when he preaches he speaks just as we do, and anybody can understand and remember all he says. But what is the use of that? He is not learned enough—he does not perplex and frighten us. Our old clergyman was something like a preacher! There was piety and wisdom! he spoke so finely and so learnedly, that when he had preached an hour and a half it was quite impossible to understand what he had been saying. And then in winter when we were all perishing with cold, did not he go on so much the longer?" Others again said, "What a fine old man our late clergyman was! How well he looked in the pulpit, and at the altar! The new one is quite a little man, and much too thin; and when the old clergyman grew eager, his voice was heard all through the village, roaring like the cattle in the fields, so that when we came out of church our ears ached for two hours afterwards. That was a fine voice! But this clergyman speaks just as if he were sitting with us in a room." Such was the opinion of the Goldenthalers: some, however, judged better.


## CHAPTER XVIII.

## MORE OF THE NEW CLERGYMAN.

THERE were many persons in the village of Goldenthal who immediately perceived that, in spite of his youth, Roderick the clergyman was a pious, worthy, and learned man, a man after God's own heart. Indeed, those who examined him attentively soon discovered his great superiority. He was affable and courteous, but serious; he was humble, but his humility inspired the greatest respect. He was never angry, never violent, but full of patience and gentleness; and when he blamed, it was the voice of love recalling an erring brother to the right path. When he arrived at Goldenthal he visited each family, and made himself acquainted with them all; and afterwards no day passed without his presence in some one or other of the cottages; he knew the true art of inspiring confidence; he could always find some cause for hope; he consoled the afflicted, he softened the hard-hearted, and reconciled those who were at variance. Following in the steps of Christ his master, he was always to be found near the poor and wretched; and from him the most hardened sinner, when repentant, learnt to hope for pardon and forgiveness.

On Sundays the effect he produced from the pulpit was something wonderful. Each felt as if he were addressing him alone. Each heard the history of his own heart, the secret of his own crimes, the true causes of his sins ; how he had fallen off from God, and the means by which he might be restored to the favour of his Heavenly Father ; while the preacher ever pointed to Jesus Christ as the type of a life which was pleasing to the Almighty. This roused the attention of his hearers to the greatest degree ; and they forgot the youth of the teacher, and his slight figure, and the weakness of his voice, for his words were words from heaven, which penetrated the heart with joy and hope.

When the clergyman paid his first visit to the village-school he was quite delighted with the cleanliness, the attention, and the obedience of the children. And when Oswald knelt with them to offer up their morning prayer, the heart of Roderick was powerfully moved at the sight. He fell upon his knees, while the tears poured down his cheeks, during Oswald's prayer ; and when it was ended, he raised his hands to heaven, and said, " God of Heaven, hear my prayer and my supplication ! Let thy grace ever be present with these innocent children, that they may never forget Thee ; be always with them to the evening of their days : and when it shall please Thee to call them from this world of trial, then, O Most Merciful Father, forgive for Jesus Christ's sake, my sins also, that I, too, may kneel with these



blessed spirits before thy throne, and that not one of us may be missing. And bless the teacher of these little ones, prosper his pious work, and give him power through thy grace to extend thy kingdom here and hereafter !”

He then rose, and said to the children, “Pray continually to God to preserve your master ; for he is truly a father to you, and without him you would be poor deserted orphans.” He said much more to them, to shew them how deeply they were indebted to Oswald ; and many of the children wept at the idea that it was possible they might ever be deprived of him ; and they now, for the first time, felt how much he had done for them. When the morning school was over, the clergyman went up to the school-master, and shaking him affectionately by the hand, said, in the presence of the children, “Excellent and pious man, you have sown seeds which will bloom in eternity. Teach me to follow your example ; for you have done much, and I as yet so little. But should I ever feel my courage fail, I will come as one of these children, and learn strength and perseverance from your example.” This was a day of rejoicing for all the children of the village. It is true that before they had dearly loved both Oswald and Elizabeth ; but now that they saw the great respect that was paid to them by the clergyman, they began to look up to them much more, and their love was mixed with the highest esteem and veneration.

Roderick had not been six months in the village, before the greater part of its inhabitants considered him as their friend and counsellor. From him came the best advice, the surest consolation: the oppressed and the sufferer found help from him. In their cottages, he spoke to them as an earthly friend; but on Sundays, when he addressed them from the pulpit, they could not help feeling as if, in the place of their kind familiar friend, a blessed spirit had descended from above, and strove to win them to the abodes of everlasting peace. He did much good to the poor, but secretly and in silence: he was ever to be found by the bed of sickness. He had in his house a small collection of the most simple remedies, which he gave readily to all who required them; and, as he knew something of medicine, he succeeded in curing several persons. Thus he was not only physician to the soul but to the body, and this procured him both confidence and obedience. Thereby, he followed the example of his Master, who healed the sick and preached the kingdom of heaven. By degrees, he prevailed on the people to give up all the injurious and superstitious remedies to which they formerly had recourse. They no longer applied to friars for blessed beads, or to quacks and mountebanks for charms and amulets; he gave both medicine and advice, and did more good than half the doctors. When an illness, however, was severe or dangerous, he insisted upon their sending to the town for an experienced physician. At first they opposed this

violently, and had more confidence in an old woman or a quack than in a respectable man who had devoted his life to the study and practice of medicine ; or, if they were not cured instantaneously, they changed from one doctor to another, using all their different remedies at once, so that they generally went from bad to worse. At last, however, the clergyman succeeded in convincing them that he understood the matter better than they did, which they allowed the more readily, as his own success in curing disorders had inspired them with confidence.

He had also another qualification, which they little expected. He was very expert in the management of bees ; he understood how to make them profitable, how to preserve them from accidents, and to provide food for them when there was any danger of its failing. Nevertheless, he did not keep his hives long ; but gave them all away to the poorest families, and taught them how to manage these useful little creatures. All he required was, that when the bees swarmed, they should be given to those who as yet had none ; and, in a short time, almost every family was provided with them. As his method was admirable, they succeeded to perfection, and soon produced a large profit by the sale of honey and wax. In course of time, Goldenthal became celebrated throughout the country for the excellence of its wax and honey, so that purchasers came from all the neighbouring places, and the prices of both these articles rose, owing to the high estimation in which



they were held. Thus they had multitudes of tiny labourers at their command, who required neither land nor food, but who ranged upon their tender wings over hill and dale, forest and meadow, and returned to their owners laden with golden treasure.

At the same time that the clergyman was making these and other praiseworthy improvements in the domestic arrangements of the villagers, he was also attempting some alterations in the church. But he found it very difficult, especially among the old people, who are apt to cling obstinately to their customs and habits. When they sang in church, it was a general shouting and hallooing, without tune or meaning. Every one screamed as if it was for a wager; it was really enough to shatter the windows, and bring down the roof, and the people were actually purple in the face from their efforts to produce harmony.

Oswald had often tried to put a stop to this irreverent clamour; but he talked to the winds, and had not sufficient authority to prevent it. So he left the old people to themselves, and determined to try what he could do with the young men and women and the children. He taught them simple and melodious hymns, arranged for four voices, which they sang so correctly and devoutly, that the old peasants and their wives listened to them with pleasure. Still they thought this was well enough at school, but not fit for church, and they always returned to the original discord.

The clergyman then tried another method. Although he had a great respect for the old psalms, he distributed a little book to the villagers containing some additional psalms, or prayers, in verse, for those occasions which were omitted among the old ones. In fact it was the same book that the children had long used in the school.

After some time Roderick preached a sermon upon the propriety of due solemnity in the celebration of public worship; and he spoke of the songs of the angels, and of their hallelujahs before the throne of God; and every one present felt that he had not raised his voice to heaven with due piety and humility as he ought to have done. Then the clergyman continued, "Our Saviour has said, 'Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not.' Let us not, therefore, prevent our sons and daughters from raising their voices in his praise. Every Sunday they sing a psalm, and we will follow them; and next Sunday shall be the first time.

On the following Sunday the church was immensely crowded. Upon the black board on which the psalm to be sung was usually inscribed, there appeared first a verse from the new hymn-book, and then one of the old psalms. Then the soft and gentle tones of childhood arose like angels' voices upon the ear, and every spirit was warmed to true devotion, while many joined humbly and modestly in the pious chaunt. Afterwards the whole congregation sang the old psalm; but the clergyman first

addressed them, saying, "Forget not, my brethren, that God is present everywhere, and he hears you even when you address him in sounds low as the harp of David." They all sang, but so gently that the soft and clear voices of the children singing in four parts, were plainly distinguished. It was beautiful ! And if it did so happen that some old woman broke forth again into the former manner of screaming, her neighbours all silenced her, and bid her not disturb the devotions of the congregation. Thus by degrees the old people learnt to join the young ones in their hymns, and all the villagers sang in a pious and subdued tone, following the clergyman and those who were acquainted with the chaunt. If a stranger came accidentally to the church at Goldenthal, he was struck with the extreme propriety and devotion with which the service was performed, and the whole country observed with surprise the improvement in the Goldenthalers.

## CHAPTER XIX.

## WHAT WAS SAID OF THE GOLDENTHALERS.

MUCH observation was excited in the neighbouring towns and villages by the alteration which had taken place at Goldenthal. Hitherto the inhabitants had the worst name in the country. They were looked upon as rogues, and vagabonds, and drunkards, and so dishonest that no one would trust them with a kreutzer. Now, strange to tell, the village no longer shewed an appearance of extreme poverty; the houses were clean and neat: the street, the little gardens and out-houses, were all kept in good order, and looked better than in many of the richest villages. In summer, men, women, and children were early at work in the fields; there was always something to be done, and it was a pleasure to see how actively they worked, and how successfully. If day labourers were wanted in the town, the Goldenthalers were now always preferred; and when the citizens' wives went to market, they always made their purchases of the peasants from Goldenthal, for they were so remarkable for their white linen, neat clothes, and clean hands, that every one was desirous of buying the

vegetables, yarn, and other things which they brought for sale.

It was well known that the Goldenthalers were poor, but they now paid the interest of their debts regularly on the day it became due ; and what was still more extraordinary, they had themselves lent small sums at good interest in the town ; this brought them both credit and confidence. If Roderick the clergyman, or Oswald the schoolmaster, would answer for a Goldenthaler, he could now borrow money as easily as any one else, and at very moderate interest, too, as the lenders were sure it would be punctually paid. Thus, having reestablished their credit, they were enabled to borrow large sums at low interest to pay off those for which they were already giving a very heavy per-centage.

The change was so remarkable that the inhabitants in the neighbourhood never ceased discussing it, and speculating on the cause. All were ready to admit that there was a good clergyman and a clever schoolmaster ; but that was not sufficient to solve the riddle, for a clergyman and a schoolmaster cannot do everything, and each clergyman and schoolmaster in the country thought himself just as clever as the two at Goldenthal put together. In vain they tried to understand the matter, until a report was spread that the peasants had talked of strange things which went on in their village. It was whispered that Oswald knew the art of making gold, and was instructing all his neighbours in it. And people shook

their heads, and looked upon the Goldenthalers as sorcerers and magicians. In fact, it was impossible to deny that the Goldenthalers now brought many things to market which it was difficult to tell how they were produced. Their vegetables, their fruit, their flax, their hemp—everything was excellent ; and their children brought the finest flowers for sale that had ever been seen ; and they sold more honey and wax than all the other villages put together. It was well known that they did not possess much cattle, though several families had a couple of cows, and one or two goats. Nevertheless, even poor cottagers who possessed but one cow, sometimes brought cheeses of a hundred weight, and large rolls of the richest butter for sale. It was quite inconceivable how one cow could give so much butter and cheese ! Besides all this, the Goldenthalers had in autumn the finest apples and pears that the country could produce. How could all this have been brought about in a few years ?

The Goldenthalers themselves laughed when they heard their village called the Goldmakers' Village. It was all in the natural course of events. Oswald understood the cultivation of fruit-trees perfectly ; and when he knew that any gentleman's garden contained fine trees, he would procure cuttings from them. Then he was always surrounded by his scholars, who had learnt from him how to prune, graft, and plant ; they were as expert as regular gardeners ; to be sure they had strange tools some-

times. Soon all the neighbours set about improving the fruit in their gardens and orchards; there was no end to the pruning and grafting. Some brought wild fruit-trees from the forest, others raised them from seeds and cuttings; each strove to surpass the other, but in the excess of their zeal they sometimes failed entirely.

The inhabitants of the town could easily comprehend how the Goldenthalers, year after year, improved their fruit, and in good seasons cleared a considerable sum of money; there was no magic in that. But to have no cattle and yet make so much butter and cheese, was really a most extraordinary feat.

Nevertheless, Oswald had learnt to perform this exploit during the war; he had seen it done in a village, and had brought the secret with him to Goldenthal. It was not difficult, and though at first the villagers would have nothing to say to it, they were soon most grateful to him for the knowledge. This is the way he set to work. He went round to all the Goldenthalers who had a cow, and said, "You do not make sufficient profit by your cows. One good cow ought to bring you in from fifty to a hundred florins yearly. If you join with me I will promise that it shall do so. But we must find many others to unite with us, as we must collect at least forty or fifty cows before my plan can succeed."

When at last they had got together the requisite number of cows he said, "Now all will go right." He found a clever dairyman, who understood thoroughly

the making butter and cheese upon a large scale. He engaged to give him two hundred florins a-year, but the dairyman was to provide linen and everything necessary ; to keep the presses, pans, dishes, &c. perfectly clean. All the proper implements and the salt were furnished by Oswald, on account of the proprietors of the cows ; three of whom he fixed upon to superintend this new undertaking during the first year.

The most desirable place that could be found for carrying on the business was the house that had formerly been the Eagle. There was a spacious cool dairy and a wash-house, with a large copper adjoining. The proprietor gave the rooms rent-free, for he had five cows, and wished to join in the experiment and see what he could make of it. It was also necessary to provide fuel at the general expense. Oswald then fixed the day on which all those who belonged to the establishment should bring their contributions of milk in clean vessels. If the vessel containing the milk was not thoroughly clean, the director had orders not to receive it, and this rule was never on any account to be infringed.

The dairyman measured the milk, and wrote under each man's name the quantity which he had brought ; he might sign it himself if he chose. So each family brought the milk from their own cows morning and evening ; but they were subject to a heavy penalty if they brought the milk of other cows.

The whole produce of one day was then put to-



gether, and each day the milk of fifty cows was made into excellent cheese and butter, which any one in the town would have been eager to purchase; fine large rolls of fresh golden butter, besides delicious whey, a most refreshing drink in summer. Now, then, came the question to whom did this rich produce belong? It was arranged in this manner: all the cheese and butter made from the milk of one day was given to the person to whom the dairy was indebted for the largest quantity of milk (the amount of each contribution being carefully written down). For the first few days, these persons received much more than they had any right to,—everything, in short, made from the milk furnished by the whole of the contributors. But whatever they had over and above the value of their own milk was noted down as a debt due to the establishment; and, until liquidated by their daily contributions of milk, they had no further claim upon the produce. Having once paid for the surplus they had received, by the accumulation of many days' milk, they had again a right to the butter and cheese the first day they became the largest unincumbered contributor. In the mean time, even those who possessed but one cow, and only brought daily a quart or two of milk, were at last shewn by the book (where all receipts were inscribed) to be the largest creditors, and in their turns received a whole day's produce,—a hundred or a hundred and fifty pounds of butter and cheese. The butter, buttermilk, and whey might be taken

away the day it was made; but the cheese was left in the cellar until it was in a fit state for sale. Each person was expected to assist the dairyman on the day that he was to receive the profits.

At first, the Goldenthalers were very distrustful of the whole concern, and each fancied he should lose by it; but when he received this large quantity of butter and cheese, and reckoned up how much milk he had furnished, then indeed he was delighted and astonished.

At the end of a year, it was ascertained that by this system the average profit of one cow amounted to above a hundred and sixty-six florins yearly, deducting the expenses. That was, indeed, a splendid profit. By degrees they understood the cause of it: the larger the quantity of milk, and the fresher it was, the better was the produce. No family could make equally good butter; for, in order to have enough milk, it must have been kept till it was stale and sour. Besides, much milk was consumed or wasted in a household, which now was producing interest in the great dairy. A great deal of time, too, was lost in making clumsily small quantities of butter and cheese: there was also a great saving in fuel. At first, some attempts were made at deception in the quantity and quality of the milk delivered. But such strict regulations were enforced, that in the end no one would, by cheating, run the risk of being heavily fined, and turned out of the society. This establishment produced another good

effect, which had not been at first anticipated. As every one was desirous of increasing the quantity of milk, they took much more care of their cattle than formerly. They endeavoured to improve their pastures, to obtain a cow of a better breed, and sometimes bought two, when before they had but one cow. As it was necessary to prevent the possibility of milk being brought from a sick cow, or one near calving, the three directors had the power of visiting them at all times, besides being bound to examine them all every half-year. This was sufficient security for the healthiness of the cattle.

## CHAPTER XX.

## THE NEW OVERSEERS AND THE LANDLORD OF THE LION.

“WELL, Oswald really must be a conjuror,” said the Goldenthalers laughing, when they saw him go from one undertaking to another, and succeed in all ; and he was certain of being successful, for he never attempted anything without much forethought. Nothing was done in a hurry or superficially ; but he advanced step by step, nor ever undertook more than he was capable of executing. Some may be inclined to think that both the schoolmaster and his beloved Elizabeth must, by this time, have been overpowered with work. By no means ; everything was so well regulated, that a large portion of the labour could now be performed by others. Even in the school Oswald had much less to do ; for he had instructed a clever youth of the name of Johann Heiter, so as to be in a great measure capable of supplying his place. He was the son of very poor parents, and Oswald had given him food and lodging, and bestowed much pains on his education ; and he had succeeded so well, that his young favourite was now of the greatest service to him ; and he was so kind

and gentle to the children, that they all loved him, and he made learning almost as pleasant to them as Oswald had done. The latter had now whole days at liberty to do as he pleased ; and it was with strong feelings of joy and satisfaction, that he watched the gradual improvement which had taken place in the village. It really was wonderful to see people who before were poor and wretched, beginning by degrees to get rid of their debts, and to make their houses snug and comfortable ; while, on the other hand, those who formerly were well off had ruined themselves by idleness, drinking, gambling, and law-suits.

Oswald's two-and-thirty confederates held manfully together, and were always ready to join in any improvement which he suggested. Their example encouraged others to do the same. The children who attended Oswald's school, and the girls whom Elizabeth instructed in needle-work, were of great service to their parents. Some, however, continued incurably idle and dissipated. At the head of the bad ones was Brenzel, the landlord of the Lion. He was a sworn enemy to innovations, and was always abusing those who introduced these changes, saying, "It would be the ruin of all religion, if things were allowed to go on in this manner." Nevertheless the clergyman, who visited him frequently, had sufficient power over him to prevent his doing much mischief. About this time he lost his chief ally, the third overseer, who was obliged to leave

the village. This man had long perceived that his beerhouse was a losing concern; and, in despair, he had taken to drinking, so that he was scarcely ever to be found sober; and, in the hope of getting rich again rapidly, he had put into several lotteries, until all his money was gone: then came his creditors, and turned him out of his house.

It had now become necessary to elect new overseers, who were afterwards to be approved by the government. The village was divided into two parties. The rogues and vagabonds wished for one or two like themselves, to whom they owed money, but the honest men would not hear of them. This occasioned great disputes; many consulted the clergyman on the subject, and this is the answer he made them. "I am very much surprised that none of you should have thought of that excellent man, who has already done so much good here, and who is so clever, so active, and so humane—I mean the schoolmaster. If you choose him, you will have the right man over you. It is true, he is not one of those who seeks a post of honour, but so much the more reason for not overlooking his merits. Those who solicit places, and endeavour to supplant others, have generally some private object of their own. They are proud and ambitious, and labour more for the gratification of their own vanity, than the good of the parish. It is certainly as well that the overseer of a parish should be a man of some property; but disinterestedness, not wealth, is the highest merit. Above all

things, he should not be one to whom half the inhabitants are in debt, for then it is making him judge and umpire in his own affairs; and they, through their own folly, become the slaves of a village tyrant. It would be far better to choose one who could keep both hard-hearted creditors and bad men in order.

“A good head is very desirable, but an honest heart will be still better for you. Ascertain first whether the man you choose is well-principled and kind-hearted, then whether he is intelligent, and not in debt to any one; for the overseer of a parish should be perfectly independent, otherwise not he, but his creditor, in whose power he is, will be overseer. It will never be difficult to discover who really is the fittest person. Think only what man would you be most desirous on your death-bed to leave guardian to your widow and orphans,—in whose hands would you consider their interests most secure? Make that man overseer. Or if you are a workman, whom should you prefer as your master? He will make the best overseer. When the majority of parish-officers are well disposed and anxious to be charitable and humane, it will always be possible to get through every difficulty. One good head is enough. Three good heads without a kind heart would never go on together. Each thinks he knows better than the others; then comes discord among them and throughout the village. Shew me the best father, kind and affectionate, but not weak; firm, but not severe;—

or tell me who is the best master ; whose workmen serve and obey him willingly, but respect him at the same time ; who regulates his household in an orderly manner, and without noise or disturbance, without disputes or anger, so that everything appears to go on of itself. Let such a man conduct the whole community ! ”

This sensible discourse of the clergyman produced a great effect upon the villagers ; and when they met to proceed to the election of two overseers, many proposed that they should not be chosen publicly, but that each man should write the name of the person he voted for upon a paper, which should afterwards be sealed, so that his vote being secret, he would be perfectly free to choose whoever he thought the fittest. Brenzel the Lion was very much against this plan, for he had already determined who should be his colleagues, and he was astonished that any one should think of opposing him, or rebelling against his authority. However, he could not carry it through. The votes were taken secretly, and the first chosen was Oswald the schoolmaster ; the second Siegfried the miller. The latter would not accept the office, because he was Oswald's father-in-law, and it was not right that the affairs of the village should be managed by a board of three, of which two were members of the same family. So, instead of the miller, a steady, active, sensible man, called Ulrich Stark was chosen.

When Brenzel saw on whom the choice had fallen, he became pale with rage. He was still in hopes



that Oswald would refuse to undertake the office, but he deceived himself. Oswald thanked the parishioners for their confidence in him, and recommended that Johann Heiter, the youth whom he had instructed with so much care, should succeed him as schoolmaster, to which they immediately consented.

Brenzel the Lion was as much stunned and astonished as if the church tower had fallen upon his head. When he got home he vented his rage first upon the poor cat, then upon his dog, who came up to him wagging his tail ; then upon the maid, who did not understand him when he ordered a glass of brandy ; and then upon his wife, who unluckily remarked that Ulrich Stark was a good soul.

## CHAPTER XXI.

## THE AUGEAN STABLE MUST BE CLEANSED.

"THE Devil's in it!" cried the landlord of the Lion, as he sat beating his breast, and tearing his hair, whenever he thought that Oswald had become overseer. But after reflecting a little, he ran with all speed to Oswald, shook hands with him as his colleague, congratulated him upon his appointment, and said, "that now they should be friends and brothers from their hearts."

Elizabeth was much astonished at this sudden change of behaviour in the landlord of the Lion, and as soon as he had left them, she said to her husband, "Oswald, Oswald, I wish you had not undertaken this office. Brenzel is a false man; he will lay some trap for you, which will bring you into danger and difficulties. Dear Oswald, be on your guard against the landlord of the Lion." Oswald kissed Elizabeth's anxious brow, and said, "Brenzel is no raging lion; I see he is only a sneaking, flattering, malicious animal—I will soon cut his claws for him."

When the overseers met for the first time, Oswald and Ulrich Stark began by insisting on a general examination of the parish accounts. They found everything in the greatest confusion; the parish owed above seven thousand florins, and nearly half of it was due to the landlord of the Lion, who had lent the money at five per cent, which he had borrowed at three and four per cent. The poor-rates and taxes for several years had been almost entirely absorbed in charges for inspections, examinations, surveys, indemnities and travelling expenses of one or other of the former overseers. No particular items were ever given in, but all charged in round sums. It was the same with the revenues of the poorhouse and the hospital; and they had not been more scrupulous with the property of the widow and the orphan. They had come to an understanding with the forest-keepers, to be allowed to cut down and sell wood, when and how they chose, nominally for the good of the parish, but without giving any account or reckoning of their proceedings. The landlord of the Lion had often boasted that his axe alone had cut down more wood than the best farm in the country was worth. In short, the property of the parish, had been wasted and neglected in the most scandalous manner; the overseers all the time not forgetting their own interests. It was proved that a large piece of common land had been sold for the enormous price of a thousand florins, and had been bought by the overseers themselves, who now, five

years after, had neither paid the purchase money, nor even the interest upon it. Besides which, it was discovered that eleven years before, the landlord of the Lion, with the consent of his colleagues, had raised a sum of four thousand florins in the name of the parish, which had been secured upon the forest rights of the community ; the parish had paid the interest with the other taxes, but the capital had remained in the hands of the overseers.

At these discoveries, Oswald could no longer restrain his indignation, but exclaimed angrily, " You have not given me the common affairs of a village to conduct and regulate, but an Augean stable to cleanse out, full of corruption and filth ; and cleansed it shall be, even if the odour rises up throughout the country. Far from defending the interests of the parish, you have trampled upon them ; you, who should have been the fathers of the widow and the orphan, you have robbed your children, and have thrown dry bread to the poor, while you were feasting upon meat and wine at your own tables. Ye hypocrites ! you have ever the word Justice in your mouths, while your actions are a series of cruelties and iniquities ; as you have sown, so will you reap. Pride leads to poverty, and crime to the gallows !" When the landlord of the Lion heard these words, he was seized with terror, and trembled from head to foot. He threw all the fault upon his former colleagues, and fell upon his knees before Oswald, be-

seeing him by all he held sacred not to be the ruin of him.

But the very same day that Oswald made these discoveries, he wrote to the government, informing it of the whole affair. The village was in a state of the greatest alarm and agitation, for no one had believed the former overseers capable of such villainy; many would not believe it, and abused Oswald, calling him a slanderer and calumniator, who wanted to give himself importance, by bringing innocent men into trouble: while Brenzel went to all his friends throughout the village, to persuade them to bear witness in his favour against this heavy accusation; but his best friends shrugged up their shoulders, and would have nothing at all to say to the business.

Long before he expected, a commission of inquiry was ordered by the government. Then all the villainy was brought to light. The landlord of the Lion was taken to prison, to be tried according to law; and the greater part of the money of which he had cheated the parish, was repaid from his own property. So ended the proud Lion; for ill-gotten wealth never prospers, and honesty is always the best policy.

Oswald was now made first overseer, and one of the most respectable men in the village chosen as the third. Roderick the clergyman took the opportunity of these disgraceful occurrences, to preach a most excellent sermon; he said, "that when children did

wrong, there was frequently much reason to blame the parents also; and that when a parish is overrun with poverty, disorder, and vice, it is a proof that the overseers are unfit for their situations, and are in some degree the cause of all the misery. But God sends relief in his own good time."

## CHAPTER XXII.

## THE DEBTS MUST BE PAID.

OSWALD had now a great deal of business in hand. No one knew exactly what he was about. Sometimes he passed the whole day in the forest, sometimes in the fields, and he was constantly going backwards and forwards to the town. "Poor Oswald!" said Elizabeth, sighing, when she went to meet him one evening as he came home tired and worried; "why do you give yourself so much trouble, dear Oswald, and let these people torment you so much? You will meet with nothing but annoyance and ingratitude, whatever you may do for them."

But Oswald answered: "Ingratitude is the coin in which people most often pay their debts. He who has the direction of a community, must think of his God and of his duty, but not of thanks or reward. Be assured, dearest wife, that God will, in the end, reward all good, as he punishes all evil." So thought Oswald; and went on with what he knew to be his duty.

He ascertained that the parish was still in debt above six thousand florins, partly owing to the long

war and the famine which followed it, and partly to the misconduct of the former overseers. Oswald sought night and day some means of removing this burden from the poor Goldenthalers, or at least of diminishing it; and when at last he had matured his plan, he proposed it to his colleagues, who, after much deliberation, approved of it, saying, "Would to God these debts were once got rid of! then each man would know what he has, we should breathe freely, and not be always thinking how to pay this heavy interest."

Shortly afterwards a survey was ordered of all the land belonging to the parish, and a new valuation made, that the real amount of each man's property might be known, and that in future the taxes and rates might be more equally laid on. Each person was obliged to lay before the overseers the amount of his debts secured upon his house and land, which was written down correctly in a book, and every one rated accordingly.

On the following Sunday after church, when the inhabitants were all assembled under the old lime-tree, Oswald addressed them in the following words: "Listen to me, my friends; our village owes six thousand four hundred florins; part of this sum is due to neighbouring towns for hay, oats, carriage, and contributions furnished in time of war. Our debt to others shall be discussed hereafter. At the present moment we will examine what the parish owes itself.



“Many of us have still considerable claims upon the parish for straw, grain, and other supplies furnished during the late war. It is true the interest is paid yearly, but you must all of you first give your consent to the money being raised ; so that, in fact, many of you merely pay yourselves, which is both troublesome and foolish. We have now divided this debt among all the householders in proportion to their property. The rich, therefore, have more to pay than the poor. The parish debt is thus changed into a private one, and he who receives as much as he has a right to claim, strikes a balance between his debt and his claims, and is free, neither paying nor receiving any more interest. He who has more due to him than the amount of his portion of debt first deducts his share of the parish debt, and then says, ‘Who pays me the remainder?’ The answer is, ‘Those will pay you from whom nothing was taken by the parish during the war.’ The surplus of debt will be divided among them, and they must either pay at once the small sum which falls to their share, or interest upon it at four per cent.”

At first this plan was not clearly understood; but when the people saw that no one would suffer by it, they were very well satisfied. For the rich, who had the largest claims, had also most to pay towards the liquidation of the parish debt; little, therefore, remained for the poorer inhabitants, and that little did not fall hard upon them, as the valuations of the

houses and lands had been made with the greatest impartiality.

The ensuing Sunday the villagers were again assembled, and Oswald once more addressed them thus: "My good friends: I have succeeded in raising the money which the parish owes, at a very low interest, in the neighbouring towns, so that Goldenthal will now have only two hundred and twenty florins of interest to provide for yearly. Nevertheless, it would fall hard upon many fathers of families to pay their share of this sum from their own incomes. Therefore it will be best that no one should do so." At this they all began to laugh, saying, "Let us hear how that is to be done; that pleases us more than all." He continued: "You know that we possess a large piece of common land. It is bad land enough, nothing grows on it but a few stunted oaks. If this land belonged to any one of you, he would make a greater profit from it. But whom does it benefit now? No one. For it certainly does no good to the rich, whose cattle feed there in summer; for not only do their cows come home in the evening thinner and more hungry than they went forth in the morning, but all the manure is lost which might be of so much benefit to their fields. And the poor who have no cows cannot profit by the common land, but must leave it all to the proprietors of cattle.—Is that just? Why should these derive more advantage from the property of the parish? Are we not all

Goldenthalers ? Has not one as much right as another ? If the poor had each a little bit of this land on which they might raise grass or clover, they would get twice as much wholesome nourishing food for their sheep and goats as they do now. It is therefore our advice that the common land should be divided in equal parts among the inhabitants, so that each may make what use he pleases of his share. The land, however, must continue to be the property of the parish. Each man will receive a lease of his land for his life, but he may neither sell it, let it, bequeath it, nor suffer it to deteriorate. At the death of the proprietor it returns to the parish, who will give it to some young peasant, who has a family, but is as yet unprovided with common land. Each will pay a small rent, which will be appropriated to the payment of the interest of the parish debt. Thus you see no man will pay this interest from his own property, but from the land which he rents from the parish."

When Oswald had ceased speaking, there arose a great noise and confusion among his hearers ; there were murmurings and loud words, angry tones, and threatening gestures, as if it had been an affair of life and death. For the rich villagers, who had hitherto entirely monopolized the common land for their cattle, would not hear of the division : they exclaimed against what they called the injustice of the plan ; and talked of making a complaint to the government. Others said, " We see well enough what it all means. They want to make the beggars

rich, and turn all the respectable men in the village into beggars. Whoever has cattle has a right to turn them out on the common. It is an old right which we have inherited from our fathers, and no one shall take it from us !”

But the majority of the peasants who were not rich, and who had no cattle, or if they had, kept them in stables in order not to lose the manure, succeeded in carrying the point, and the right of pasture was given up. A surveyor was sent for who divided the common into as many parts as there were families in the parish, who then drew lots for them. The rich inhabitants went and complained to the government of this unjust infringement of their privileges ; the answer they received was to this purport : “ The right of pasture belongs to the inhabitants, and not to the cattle of Goldenthal. Therefore, each individual can make what use he pleases of his portion. You are not defending your old rights, but your old selfishness, besides which you understand ill your real interests. From this time forward the right of pasture is abolished, so go in peace and learn wisdom.” The rich peasants took their leave, and went home disappointed and crest-fallen ; and for the first time they regretted the absence of Brenzel, the landlord of the Lion, who was now shut up in the House of Correction, saying, “ With all his faults he was an excellent man ; he never gave up old rights and customs : this never would have happened in his time.”

## CHAPTER XXIII.

ONCE MORE, THE DEBTS MUST BE PAID.

IN the following spring, the common land, so lately a bleak desert, had already become an image of smiling plenty ; where hitherto the coarse and scanty herbage scarce maintained a few starveling cows, there now bloomed a perfect garden. There were peas, beans, cabbages, potatoes, hemp, flax, clover, and all kinds of grain in endless variety. Every one saw immediately that his harvest would not only pay the small rent, but leave him a large surplus. Even the rich peasants, when at last they came to understand the matter rightly, (always a very difficult thing with them,) saw how great would be the advantage. For not only did they obtain fodder for the cattle that remained in the stables, but a great increase of milk as well as money : and had each, as they suggested, paid his portion of the interest of the parish debt from his own property, it would have fallen heaviest upon the rich ; instead of which, they now obtained a surplus from the land allotted to them. Oswald, however, was not yet satisfied, and it was not without a reason that he passed so much

of his time in the forest. He had held several consultations with the head ranger, who was an extremely clever man in his own department, and had conducted him all over the Goldenthal forests. Oswald was evidently preparing some other change, but nobody could make out exactly what. The rich peasants said, "We know well enough we shall be the sufferers!" This time, however, they were mistaken. Great was the public curiosity when the inhabitants of Goldenthal were once more assembled to receive an important proposition from the overseers. Oswald stood forth and addressed them in the following words:—"My good friends, it is well known that a man without debts is respected by all. But we are not yet free from debt. We pay our interest from our allotments of parish land. But it would be still better if each could keep the produce in his own possession for ten years or more. Then everything would be set right." The people laughed, and said to one another, "The proposal is not disagreeable."

Oswald continued: "I, and my colleagues, will take upon us to answer for the payment of the whole or the greater part of the parish debt, without its costing you anything, if you will agree to three resolutions."

"Aha!" cried the rich peasants; "here comes the rub."

Oswald said, "Listen to me, and then judge whether I am right or wrong. We have about a hundred families in Goldenthal."

"True," answered the peasants.

"Each family," said Oswald, "receives three fathoms of wood, besides faggots, yearly, from the forests belonging to the parish."

"That is also true," said the peasants.

"And some families," said Oswald, "require much more, but some considerably less, if their food is prepared at the public kitchen. But all could manage with much less wood, if so large a portion was not consumed in baking, washing, drying fruit, &c. Think only if, in one week, ten or twenty families have a washing, or a baking, how much wood is consumed in each house?"

The peasants murmured, and said, "True enough; but how are we to live without bread, or go about in dirty clothes."

"There are many villages much richer than ours," said Oswald, "which yet save and economize far better, and that alone would make them richer. There are villages which have not as much forest land as we have, but which have wood enough and even some to sell. How do they contrive this? I will tell you. Several families join together to have one general bakehouse and washhouse. Each person brings his dough and his fruit when his turn arrives. And, as the oven is never allowed to cool, it requires but a small contribution of wood from each person to keep up the necessary degree of heat. This is real economy. Why should we not do the same? Why have we not done it long ago? Because we are either too

stupid, or too idle. And consider, also, how great is the danger of fire to the whole village when baking and washing is carried on in so many small houses. Think how much wood might be saved if we had small stoves, merely to warm the rooms, instead of the immense furnaces, which consume so much wood, and which are necessary when they are to serve for baking and washing; burning wood is almost like burning gold."

The whole honourable assembly scratched their heads in extreme perplexity.

Oswald continued, "Look around you; other parishes have already established general washhouses, which each household makes use of in turn, and contributes to support. There is the same economy of wood,—the same security against fire in the village. We know this, and we approve of it; and, nevertheless, each family still persists in washing and ironing at home. Our ovens are quickly worn out, our coppers and caldrons destroyed by constant use,—they often require repairing, which is expensive. Were there a general washhouse for the parish, had each row of houses a bakehouse in common, it would certainly cost much less. Now, then, my good friends and neighbours, we propose to you to erect a parish bakehouse, and a general washhouse, such as exist in other places. The first cost shall be furnished by the parish; we will all assist in building and preparing them to the best of our abilities. What say you?"

And a great deal they had to say about it. Some



preferred leaving things as they had always been ; others saw at once that a parish washhouse was a good idea, but they would not have a bakehouse, merely because they had never heard of it before. Others again were in favour of both. After a long dispute, however, the majority were decidedly for the erection of both washhouse and bakehouse, which was accordingly agreed upon.

“Bravo !” cried Oswald joyfully. “My friends and neighbours, your decision does you honour, and will amply repay you. Now comes the best part : you will, in future, save a great deal of your portion of wood, convert it into money, and pay the parish debt with it. Listen to me, and help me to calculate. If each household which have hitherto received three fathoms of wood a-year, besides faggots, can get through the year with only two fathoms, there will be a hundred fathoms saved in the year. As the fathom of wood is worth five florins, that makes five hundred florins. In ten years, we shall have saved five thousand florins, and our debt will be paid ; but this is not all. There are about six hundred acres of forest belonging to the parish. Since the right of pasture has been taken away by the government, there is, as you know, nothing to impede the growth of underwood. I have examined the forest with the head ranger ; he says, “that every acre produces at least half a fathom of wood yearly. That such trees, as birch, alder, hornbeam, aspen, and maple, should be left till they are thirty years

old ; while the large timber, such as oak, beech, fir, and pine, must be left for seventy or a hundred years or more. Therefore, in order to manage our forests properly, we must divide our underwood into thirty portions, and our timber into one hundred or more. If we only cut down one portion of each yearly, we shall always have the same quantity of wood, and shall cut neither too much nor too little, and we and our descendants will always have a sufficient supply of old well-grown timber. The ranger also says that we have an immense number of old fir trees, which, according to all the rules of woodcraft, ought immediately to be cut down and replaced by young trees. If we do this, our descendants a hundred years hence will again have trees a century old, standing in their places. Therefore, my advice and that of my colleagues is this :— If we save a hundred fathoms of wood yearly, in ten years we shall have saved a thousand fathoms. Instead of waiting ten years, let us cut down the requisite quantity at once, pay our debt, put the interest into our pockets ; and for ten years consume only two fathoms of wood yearly in each family.”

When the assembly heard this proposal, the noise and murmuring recommenced. The majority were glad enough to have the money for the interest ; but they would have been glad to keep the wood too. They disputed about it till dusk, and then separated without coming to any decision.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

## STILL GREATER IMPROVEMENTS TAKE PLACE.

THE rational and sensible men in the village shook their heads, saying, "We shall never succeed in this business of the woods and forests with these obstinate people." Oswald, however, smiled, and told them to have patience; good things must take time. The people must talk it over, sleep upon it, and get accustomed to the idea. Rome was not built in a day;—our peasants, when anything new is proposed to them, are just like children when they see a stranger; they run away screaming and crying; then they stop and look at him from a distance; then, when they have found out that he does not bite, they approach step by step, and at last play with him, and become the best friends in the world.

In the meantime, preparations were made for building the washhouse, and the furnaces for baking bread and drying fruit. Trees were felled, stones were broken; lime, chalk and bricks prepared: all worked without pay. Those families who wished to have an oven between them joined together, arranged in what order they should have the use of it, and chose the

best and fittest place. Oswald had provided an excellent bricklayer, who understood thoroughly the art of building ovens and stoves. He visited himself various villages, where this plan had been adopted, in order to follow at Goldenthal the method which had succeeded best. By the autumn, everything was finished, and in full activity, to the great delight of the Goldenthalers. They now found that, in fact, a great deal of fuel was saved, with much less danger of fire than formerly. One thing follows another; many people were now convinced how unnecessary it was to have such great clumsy stoves; smaller ones would consume much less fuel. Oswald and the clergyman had small stoves in their rooms, which could also be used for cooking. The former landlord of the Lion, Brenzel, had also had them in his house, that it might look more town-like; there was something to be gained by it. They could sell the wood that was saved, and so make money. Many persons thought of Oswald's words, "burning wood is almost like burning gold;" but they feared the expense of changing the stoves.

However, several members of the Goldmakers' league, over whom Oswald had still great influence, by his advice, had their stoves altered early in the autumn,—the more readily, as he supplied some of the poorest with money for the purpose, and sent for a clever workman from the town to do it. It was a curious sight to see how all the neighbours, from every corner of the village, came to examine these new

fireplaces, just as if they had been extraordinary machines. They laughed at them and criticised them ; but when the winter came, and all was ice, snow, and storms out of doors, they were quite astonished to find how warm these little fireplaces made the rooms : and when in the spring many of the proprietors of the new stoves had wood to sell, the great advantages of the change became evident. The large clumsy stoves lost their defenders, and every one must needs have one of these strange little machines in his house. Some who had seen them in other houses, were able to put them up themselves, and even with slight improvements, which met with universal approbation.

In the spring, the tax-gatherer went round from house to house, saying, " The interest of the parish debt must now be paid — give me the rent of the land you have from the parish ! " But it was a sad affair to have to pay two florins or more, and to get nothing for it. Some said, " The devil take the parish debt ! " Others hastened to Oswald, and said, " Oh, sir, why have you said no more of your plan for paying off the debt by the sale of timber ? Pray bring it forward again ? " This was just what Oswald expected ; and when the people were assembled, he said, " I hear from all sides, that the whole village are agreed it is desirable to pay off our debt. But nobody will be satisfied to receive a fathom less wood yearly. Well, then, let us see if you will give up half a fathom. It will not be as much missed

as a whole one, particularly with the new arrangements. If we take, then, two fathoms and a-half, instead of three, until we have wood enough in the forest again, we can cut down sufficient timber to liquidate our debt." Some murmurings were still to be heard, but at last the plan was agreed to; and as it was not only permitted, but highly approved by the government, a general sale of timber was very soon announced, and many purchasers attended from far and near.

Under the direction of the ranger, the oldest trees were cut down, and in some places the thinnings of the young trees were also disposed of, to be cut down in two years, that they might not go at too low a price; and at the end of two years, they had realized six thousand florins, so that the parish debt was not only paid, but there remained a large surplus, which was put out to interest for future emergencies. The head ranger and the government agreed fully with Oswald as to what was to be done. In order that the forest, which was the most valuable part of the parish property, should be properly managed, they sent a surveyor, who measured and made a map of it. The head ranger then went through the plantations and divided them into portions, and wrote down in what year each portion would be fit to cut down; and so provision was made for a hundred years to come. He also wrote some advice and instructions for the overseers, with regard to cutting down and planting each year, and gave

them a set of regulations, which were adopted as a law in the village, and which contained everything to be done in future, with regard to felling trees, the distribution of wood to the people, announcing the necessary sales of timber, punishments for injuries done to the trees, appointing rangers and keepers, &c., so that everything might be managed to the greatest advantage.

These excellent regulations enabled them, if the portion of wood appointed to be felled proved to be deficient in quantity, to supply it from one in which there was a superabundance. The keepers were better paid, and watched zealously day and night to prevent the trees being injured by thieves and vagabonds. Every two years the boundaries and landmarks of the forests, as well as of all the parish lands, were verified and examined by the overseers, keepers, and proprietors, accompanied by all the old men and young boys of the village, thereby providing against the many disputes and lawsuits which had been occasioned by the uncertainty of the boundaries.

## CHAPTER XXV.

## THERE IS STILL GREAT DISTRESS IN THE VILLAGE.

Nothing could equal the astonishment of the whole neighbourhood at the proceedings of the Goldenthalers. Not only was the parish no longer in debt, but those persons who were known to have been greatly involved, were beginning to save a little. Everybody in the town, who had money to dispose of, was most willing to lend it to the Goldenthalers; for they knew that the overseers were extremely conscientious with regard to what security was given, and knew, to a kreutzer, how much any acre of land was encumbered. So that the Goldenthalers had the advantage over other places, where this was not the case. And if ever a beggar said he was from Goldenthal, he was answered, "Are you not ashamed to come from Goldenthal and beg?" For it was believed there could be no beggars in the Goldmakers' village.

Everyone was mistaken, however; for, in this newly flourishing village, there was still a considerable remnant of the old set. There were still families who were quite irreclaimable, let the clergyman preach, or the overseers menace, as they would. These people



would rather live in idleness and beggary, in all the misery of cold and hunger, than earn a scanty subsistence by the sweat of their brow. There were still persons who brought up their children to beg and steal; and would cruelly chastise them when they returned at night without having collected enough by these disgraceful means. There were still those who would spend in drink whatever they gained by work or from charity. It was in vain to suppose that these people would at last die off; on the contrary, they increased with the prosperity of the Goldenthalers, for they married among themselves, and brought children into the world, without troubling themselves as to the means of supporting them. These beggars said, "The parish pays poor-rates which belong to us: they must support us, whether they will or not; they can neither drive us away, nor let us die of hunger." The good clergyman, Roderick, was much grieved at such insolent language, and he often said to the overseers, "You may labour as you will; as long as you have these examples of idleness, dissipation, and debauchery in the village, so long will you be unable to make much progress in reform. For what is gained by respectable and hard-working families, is soon consumed by the paupers. These are constant impediments to the improvement of the others, and the sight of so much vice and idleness serves to corrupt their neighbours."

The parish officers were as much convinced of this as the clergyman. But how was it possible to put a

stop to such obstinate laziness, and its attendant pauperism? Here was the difficulty. It is true, there was a species of poorhouse in the village, but, as it was too small to contain all the paupers, there were almost as many out as in. And, indeed, one would have scrupled to oblige anybody to go into it. The clergyman visited this poorhouse frequently, in the hope of improving the inmates ; but quite in vain. Here dwelt, in one common misery, old and young, men and women,—in short all who had no home of their own. That house was, as the clergyman expressed it, a perfect grave of souls. The children saw and learnt many shameful things from the old ; and the constant intercourse of persons of both sexes, and of the worst morals, was a terrible encouragement to vice. The land belonging to the poorhouse was shamefully neglected, and Oswald had the greatest difficulty in introducing into the house itself even a little more outward attention to cleanliness. However much he considered the matter, he could hit upon no plan for the amelioration of this idle, ill-disposed multitude ; and he began, however reluctantly, almost to believe that it was a necessary evil.

Not so the clergyman ; he would not rest, and was determined not to be a witness of so much vice and corruption in his parish, without making an effort to put a stop to it. But as he was a prudent man, and knew that, in order to obtain a salutary influence, he must be on good terms with all his parishioners, he avoided, as much as possible, interfering with the

temporal affairs of the parish. He sometimes gave good advice, or suggested an appropriate idea, and rejoiced if he saw it adopted by one or other of the overseers. But he never showed that it had originated with him, leaving to the overseers all the honour of having discovered the right thing themselves. Flattered by this, they were the more ready to follow what they saw to be desirable. The clergyman believed it necessary that the overseers should possess the highest authority in the parish, and he thought it would be diminished by its being known that they were led or influenced by the clergyman. Thus this excellent man laboured in silence, without credit to himself, and without those for whom he acted being aware of his exertions. And even when things did not go as he hoped and meant, he was not discouraged, and never withdrew his hand from the good work. He was modest enough to believe that others might have equally good intentions, and more practical experience than himself: he praised and encouraged every attempt at usefulness, and excused every failure and error, in consideration of the goodness of the motive.

"We must not suffer this crowd of idle paupers to encumber our village," said Oswald to the clergyman; "but how to get rid of them I know not. These hereditary beggars are a disgrace and a torment to a community; and, like the vampire, they draw their support from the life's blood of the honest and laborious. The sight of that poorhouse makes me shudder. It costs so much, is of so little benefit, and,

in fact, is but an encouragement to vice and debauchery."

Roderick answered: "At last, Oswald, you have spoken openly. Had we no poorhouse, we should have no inhabitants for it. The greatest number of beggars and idlers are ever to be found in those places where the poorhouse is best provided, and the largest sums are given in charity."

"I have sometimes thought," said Oswald, "of doing away entirely with the poorhouse. But we should not be better off. In the best conducted parishes there will ever be some poor and some vagabonds. What is to be done with them? I have seen places where the poor were supported by going round from one rich peasant, or small farmer's house, to another; or a certain number lived for a given number of days at the expense of some appointed householder, and were lodged in his stable or outhouses. But this wandering life was often hard and cruel upon the sick and old, and for those who were capable of working, it was an encouragement to idleness, equally pernicious to soul and body. In villages where begging is forbidden, I have known the paupers boarded by the parish at the houses of those who would take them in at the lowest possible rate. These were generally very poor people, almost as ill off as themselves, anxious to gain a little money by any means, and who were thoroughly corrupted by such profligate associates. This was no profit to the parish, but rather injury, for the paupers and

vagabonds were not better off, and contaminated all those with whom they resided. It makes my heart bleed to think of the unhappy orphans who in this way were put out to nurse to the lowest bidder, a prey to every species of misery. In bad times these people would take the money, and let the poor little wretches perish with hunger; and if they cried and complained would beat them to make them silent. Once that the body of one of these miserable victims was opened, it was found to contain nothing but grass and water, and shewed marks of the most barbarous treatment. Truly, there is often more pity and humanity to be found among Turks and heathens, than among our own peasantry. I know," continued Oswald, "that in many parishes the overseers have built expensive poorhouses and almshouses, not from pure humanity, but in order to diminish the trouble of providing for the poor. For many overseers, though they like the importance of their situations, will do anything to get rid of the labour which their duties entail upon them."

Oswald ceased speaking; and the clergyman rejoiced to see that he possessed such a thorough knowledge of the subject. Roderick then said: "I have myself put down in writing my ideas upon this most important matter; read this paper; it contains many crude undigested thoughts, but you can adopt, improve, or reject any that you please." Oswald took the clergyman's manuscript home with him and read it through several times; then he consulted his col-

leagues, and returned to Roderick with a variety of objections, listened to his answers, and again referred to his colleagues. At last they all agreed upon a plan for the improvement of the poor of the village. The principal inhabitants were then assembled, gave their opinions, and suggested further changes; these met with due consideration, and at last they were all unanimous in favour of the plan which shall be developed in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

## WHAT THE GOLDENTHALERS DID WITH THEIR PAUPERS.

AFTER much deliberation, the reform of the poorhouse was commenced. But no one could imagine how it would be possible to feed so many beggars, idlers, sick and old people, and children, without an immense expense.

In the first place, with the approbation of the government, a sum of money was taken from the funds of the poorhouse, and expended in the purchase of spades, axes, saws, and every species of tool. Many improvements were made in the interior of the poorhouse; the kitchen was considerably enlarged, so that it was now possible to cook for many families: a workroom was built for the men, another for the women, and two infirmaries were appropriated to the invalids of both sexes.

Each person in health had a separate sleeping-place. It was but a narrow cell, ten feet long, and a few feet wide; there was only room upon the floor for a straw mattress, a pillow with coarse sheets, and a warm woollen coverlid. In the door of each cell was an opening to admit air and light. We must

not make beggars too comfortable," said Oswald, "or they will not strive to obtain better lodgings, and improve their condition by their own exertions." The greatest part of the house was taken up with these little sleeping-places. Under the large projecting roof of the building were immense stores of wool, hemp, wood, &c.

As soon as everything was prepared, the overseers made a list of all those persons who could not live without the assistance of the parish. That was easily done; they were only too well known: several of them had homes of some description in the village, while others, without a roof to shelter them, lived by begging from door to door. All those who had no homes, were taken into the poorhouse. They went willingly, for winter was approaching; those who had but one room, or lived crowded together with others, so that old and young, men and women, all slept in the same room, were brought into the poorhouse; those only were allowed to remain in their houses, who could prove that they had the means of lodging themselves and their children decently and properly. All the paupers in the village were divided into two classes, those who remained in their own dwellings, and those who were received into the poorhouse; both were considered as equally dependent upon it. Whenever it was possible, the children were left with their parents; but if the cottages were too small, or the parents were in the poorhouse, or known to be of corrupt or vicious characters, then



the children were placed with good, respectable families, either in the village or the neighbourhood,—not with the very needy, who only took them for the money they received with them, nor with the rich who would neglect them. The children were clothed by the parish, and a small indemnity paid to their foster parents if desired: but few of those who took the children required any; they did it at the request of the clergyman, and out of true christian charity. The clergyman himself was looked up to as the father of the widow and the orphan; he had taken two ill-conducted, bad boys, whom no one would have anything to do with, into his own house, and before six months were over, to the astonishment of everyone, they had become well-behaved and obedient. In this way were the children disposed of; and removed from the pernicious influence of their parents' bad example, and from the scenes of vice and misery to which they had hitherto been accustomed, they soon adopted the industrious and religious habits of those by whom they were now surrounded.

The principle on which the overseers thus assumed the right of disposing of the poor, and separating them from their children, was this:—"Whoever is not in a situation to support himself, and has no one to depend upon, must be supported by the parish; and whoever is supported by the parish is under its controul and superintendence, until they are enabled to provide for their own subsistence. This is but just and right."

With this object, a respectable man was appointed guardian, or protector, of each pauper family: his duties were to superintend the feeding, clothing, earnings, and expenses of the family confided to his care; to insist upon the maintenance of cleanliness and order in the dwellings of these out-pensioners, and to watch strictly over the work which was entrusted to them. For, as they received their food from the kitchen of the poorhouse, where it was prepared in large quantities, and were also provided with clothes and tools, it was deemed advisable that they should pay for it by their work. Whatever by industry and diligence they accomplished beyond their appointed task, they were paid for. Nevertheless, this money, and that which they earned from the farmers as day labourers, was not paid into their own hands, but placed for them in the savings' bank; for those who have everything given them for their subsistence, want no money, but must be taught to save and economize. The guardian, or protector, was expected to make a report from time to time to the clergyman, upon the conduct and state of the family under his care: for the clergyman himself, the protector of the poor, was the real overseer of these guardians; he noted down all they did, and if he found any one fail in his execution of this truly Christian office, upon his complaint they were immediately removed by the parish-officers. It is incredible how much good was done by this constant and direct superintendence of every poor family or person in the

village. For, as the duties of the guardian only extended to a single family, it was easy to execute them well and thoroughly. Each performed his part readily and without payment, out of Christian charity. There soon arose a praiseworthy emulation among them; they strove by good advice, example, and such slight assistance as they could themselves afford, to improve the condition of the families under their protection. Thus many wretched, forlorn beings, had suddenly become possessed of a protector and a friend, for whose kindness they would have reason to be grateful during the rest of their lives.

Now came the important question, How to pay for the food and clothing of so many paupers? The funds of the poorhouse were not sufficient; but Oswald said,

“It would, indeed, be a shame if strong, young people could not earn their own bread. All must be considered as one family, old and young, men and women, those in and out of doors; all must work for each and each for all. The out pensioners must work during the week for what is given them; and those in doors must work eight hours every day, except Sundays and holidays.” And so it was: whoever refused to work was shut up in the strong-room, with no food but water and cold potatoes without salt; this soon brought them to their senses. Those who worked willingly were well fed, and had soup, and vegetables every day, and meat, twice a week. Those who worked more than eight hours were paid for the

extra time, or the product of their industry bought from them and the money placed in the savings-bank, so that on leaving the house they would not be penniless. Whoever misbehaved, cursed, or swore, or was guilty of any disorderly conduct, was shut up in the strong room without hesitation or mercy ; but those who worked steadily and distinguished themselves by their decency and propriety of conduct, had always the hope of bettering their condition ; they might become one of the directors or even master of the poorhouse : for the inspectors who directed the works and superintended the conduct of the inmates, and watched over the cleanliness of the rooms, beds, clothes &c, were always chosen from amongst the best behaved of the paupers, and made their reports to the master, who was himself a pauper. They, as well as the cooks, had this advantage, that they were not forced to labour with the rest ; what they could earn after having fulfilled all the duties of their offices, was their own, and placed for them in the savings-bank, or employed in purchasing the raw materials, with which they worked for themselves. There were some sub-inspectors, who were obliged to work four hours, but who had the benefit of all they could earn at other times.

Elizabeth had the superintendence of the kitchen, and instructed two women in the art of cooking. Others had the care of all the linen and clothes, as well as the washing. Thus between the fear of punishment, and the hope of reward, the inmates of

the poorhouse were brought to a very orderly and profitable state.

There was no chance of any scarcity of work for the poorhouse the whole year round. Not only the land belonging to it was to be cultivated, the garden planted with vegetables, hedges, ditches, and out-houses kept in repair, but each man was obliged to keep in order the piece of land allotted to him by the parish ; and every out-pensioner had the profit of his little bit of land ; so that, after paying what he was indebted to the poorhouse for food, clothing, and lodging, he might sell the residue to his guardian, and what it brought was put into the savings-bank.

The men were also employed in mending the roads, draining bogs and marshy parts of the forest, making plantations, and in all kinds of carpenters' and bricklayers' work for the improvement of the poorhouse and the cottages of the out-pensioners. In bad weather, and in winter, they had still more to do. Those who understood the use of the lathe, plane, and saw, were employed in making all kinds of house and kitchen furniture. Others learnt to weave flax and hemp into a coarse woollen cloth, which was very durable, and adapted to their own consumption. Winter and summer the looms were always going. The women, and even the children, worked in the fields when there was any want of hands. The women had also the washing, mending, and making of all the clothes and linen ; they spun wool, hemp, and flax, and prepared it for the weavers ; they knit

stockings, shirts, and counterpanes ; all worked for the general good, and they found themselves so well off, that in a short time several families who from fear had at first declared that they could support themselves without begging or assistance from the parish, came voluntarily into the poorhouse. This arrangement was extremely advantageous, as the administration cost nothing ; for the master, the inspectors, the cooks, the servants, the wood-cutters, were not paid ; they were the paupers themselves. The clergyman, the guardians, Oswald, and Elizabeth took no reward for their labour of love ; and the schoolmaster, Johann Heiter, kept all the books and accounts of the receipts, expenses, and earnings of the in and out-pensioners with admirable exactitude. In fact, the whole establishment supported itself ; the people cultivated, prepared, and dressed their own food : they spun, they wove, they cut out and made their own clothes from the hemp and flax which their own hands had planted ; they made their own tables, chairs, beds, presses, wooden plates, and spoons, and kept everything in a perfect state of repair. They soon raised more grain and vegetables than was sufficient for their own nourishment, and they had soon more yarn and linen, tools and furniture, than they required. This was sold for the benefit of the establishment, and the money employed in the purchase of wool, cotton, iron, &c.

This system worked so well, that before the expiration of two years, they were enabled to repay the

sum of money which had been originally advanced by the parish. As the people were kept constantly at work, were deprived of the means of drinking, and the men and women were almost always separated, a great improvement was soon visible in their morals.

One rule was strictly adhered to,—no one was allowed to marry who could not support his wife out of the poorhouse, and without assistance from the parish. But what was most remarkable among these formerly vicious and corrupt people, was their increased respect for religion, and the obligations which it imposes; and this was due to the exertions of the clergyman. Several times in the week he read evening prayers to the inmates of the house; the out-pensioners were also allowed to attend,—a permission of which they readily availed themselves. He then explained to them various passages from the Bible, particularly those which applied to their own situation, and shewed them that their best hope of happiness here and hereafter was in living in the fear of God and love of their neighbour; these exhortations produced far more beneficial effects than all the menaces and punishments of former parish officers.

Both the in and out-pensioners had entire liberty to leave the institution whenever they chose, provided they could shew by what means they could support themselves and their families; and when any one had lived during a whole year without assistance, supporting himself by the work of his own hands, diligently and honestly, whatever he possessed in the

savings-bank might be placed at his own disposal ; of course he was no longer under the superintendence of a guardian, and was considered as any other inhabitant of the village.

That which caused the immense superiority of the Goldenthal poorhouse over others was, that the paupers were obliged to prepare everything they required for food, clothing, and lodging, themselves. Nothing was provided so as to enable them to live in idleness ; they depended upon their own exertions. Instead of a life of indolence and listlessness, or some trifling employment which soon incapacitated them for hard work, or those light easy occupations by which children are enabled to gain as much as grown-up people, which leads to early debauchery, imprudent marriages, and a constant increase of pauperism ; here every one was obliged to labour to the best of his ability, for that which would be a benefit to him for the rest of his life ; all were forced to dig, plough, sow, plant, chop wood, spin, weave,—in short spend eight hours of the day in the rudest toil.



## CHAPTER XXVII.

## PRACTICE IS BETTER THAN THEORY.

It happened in Goldenthal, as in many other places, that no sooner did a clever and intelligent man propose anything new in order to remedy long existing abuses, than every one thought it his business to oppose and counteract his schemes. Some were full of doubts and irresolution ; others shook their heads, and shrugged their shoulders, or repeated that trite and unsatisfactory phrase used by all moral cowards, "What is the use of attempting impossibilities?"

Oswald was well aware of all the difficulties attending his projects, and had grown wise by experience and suffering. If he had developed the whole of his plan for the poorhouse to the Goldenthalers at first, as he had it in his mind, they would all have taken the alarm, have cried out that it was wild and hopeless, and repeated "What is the use of attempting impossibilities?" But Oswald thought practice was better than theory, and he did not even communicate his entire plan to his colleagues ; for although honest, well-meaning men, they were timid, and could not have comprehended it ; and he only suggested

each change when the moment came to put it into execution. Everything being done by degrees, nothing was too difficult ; and when the whole scheme was at last carried out, it was approved by the government in terms of the most encouraging praise. It was afterwards discovered that, even in the capital, many people had ridiculed the plan and treated it as impracticable, long after it had been, without their knowledge, actually carried into execution.

The first opposition came from the in-pensioners, who refused to sleep in the little cells. They were told that if they worked diligently, they would soon be able to hire a room, or even build themselves a cottage. However, they would not work, and spent the whole day in the strong-room, with nothing to eat but potatoes and water ; this they liked still less. Some endeavoured by obedience to improve their condition, and submitted to their fate, particularly during the winter, when it was by no means agreeable to wander on the high roads, or sleep on the bare ground. When they had once learned to work, and enjoyed better food and better treatment, and possessed a few florins in the savings-bank, the fruit of their own industry, then they were ready enough to remain where they were ; for they would not risk this little property by misconduct, but, on the contrary, were anxious to increase it, so that it afforded a powerful hold over them. Others, however, ran away, preferring to lead an idle life, wandering through the world and begging. They were themselves the only sufferers ; the parish

profited, inasmuch as it had no longer to maintain them. Some were never heard of more ; some were taken up by the police in other districts, and sent back again. These first paid a visit to the strong-room, and then returned to work as before. In a short time no Goldenthal beggars were to be found, except a very few in distant places.

The out-pensioners began also by opposing the regulations, and attempting to retain the disorderly and filthy habits to which they were accustomed ; and they complained bitterly of the hard-heartedness of their neighbours, who would no longer feed them in idleness, or give them money. But hunger and the strong-room succeeded in taming the most troublesome ; and the overseers persisted in their resolution, that those who would eat must work, and those who expected to be well-treated must behave well. The administration of the poorhouse was formerly very expensive ; now it cost nothing : neither the clergyman nor Oswald would enrich themselves at the expense of the poor ; all the household duties, as it has been already said, were performed by the paupers themselves. To the best behaved, some domestic office was confided as a recompense, and in case of ill-conduct was taken from them as a punishment : everyone took care that his neighbour did his duty. The garden and fields belonging to the poorhouse produced a great deal of food ; and those portions of the parish land which each poor family had received, became extremely fertile, from being cultivated in

common, and well looked after : thus the food and clothing received by the out-pensioners from the poor-house, was paid for by the produce of this land, and any little surplus was deposited in the savings-bank. The paupers in the house set to work very awkwardly at first, but the clergyman sent for an excellent workman from the town, who was well known to him ; and at a small expense, the people learnt to saw and chop wood, to card wool, and to spin and weave. The clothing of the paupers cost the parish but little, and the furniture and improvements in the house scarcely anything. The in-door pensioners made furniture for the others, so that by degrees each family was comfortably lodged and provided for.

If the parish profited by the facility with which so many persons were clothed and fed, owing to the employment of so great a number of hands, the people at the same time found their own little property increase. It was no small advantage to be allowed the benefit of whatever work they did beyond eight hours, besides the surplus produce of their little allotments. By degrees they learned to work with pleasure, and took much pains to improve their land, and save in every possible way, as they foresaw the time might come when they would be able to live independently, and in the enjoyment of a moderate degree of comfort and prosperity. The master of the poorhouse and his assistants were the best off, for they were paid for all their work, beyond the

duties of their offices ; so that all were ambitious to obtain one or other of these situations : and those who were so fortunate as to succeed, were particularly careful not to neglect duties which were so easy and brought so many advantages ; and the slightest fault was sufficient to make them lose their employments, to which so many aspired. By degrees, the inmates of the poorhouse at Goldenthal became very excellent workmen ; and not only the peasants in the neighbourhood, but many of the citizens, were desirous to buy the produce of their industry, or to furnish them with work. When a clever workman discovered that he earned more by working on his own account, he left the poorhouse, and established himself in the village or the town, where, by diligence and activity, he found it easy to support himself ; and this encouraged the others to become equally skilful.

All the inhabitants of the village rejoiced much at finding themselves freed from the crowd of beggars who had so long annoyed them, and it was now a rare event to hear of a robbery, either in the houses or the gardens and orchards. Instead of giving alms as heretofore, everyone willingly sent a small contribution to the poorhouse, if at any time there was a deficiency in the funds. But there was another advantage to the village which had not been anticipated : when there was not sufficient fieldwork in summer to employ everybody, other out-of-door work was attended to ; all the streets

of the village, which formerly, in bad weather, were a foot deep in mud, were now paved with stones, and a proper channel was made for the rivulet, which traversed the village, and which, before, overflowed whenever it rained, filling the streets with pools of stagnant water; the bye-roads and paths were kept in order, and every vacant spot in the forest was covered with young trees, carefully planted and tended; no forest throughout the country was in better condition, and there was no more flourishing village to be seen than Goldenthal.


Commissioners were sent by the government to visit the poorhouse and examine into all the arrangements, and they strongly recommended their adoption all over the country; but in other villages they sought in vain for the exemplary clergyman Roderick, the philanthropic Oswald, and his zealous and gentle helpmate Elizabeth. However, the attempt was made in several places, and with partial effect; and they were right to try, for practice is better than theory; and when there is a firm determination to benefit mankind, it seldom totally fails of success.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

## ANOTHER NOVELTY.

"WHAT is Oswald at now?" said the peasants to one another. For when others were resting after their day's work, he and the schoolmaster and two or three boys were running about the fields; they dragged long chains with them, and stuck tall poles into the earth, which Oswald was continually looking at over a small long-legged table; the schoolmaster Heiter, too, seemed very well pleased with his work, but no one else could make out what they were at.

This went on for nearly a year; and when the peasants discovered that Oswald had been measuring every field and piece of land, and was making a plan of them with all the roads and paths, many were much disturbed, for there was again a talk of war, and they feared he might betray the country to the enemy. The fact was, that Oswald understood surveying and measuring land, and had many books upon the subject; he had instructed his favourite, Johann Heiter, in this art, and several other youths who had shewn a capacity for it; and at the time the forest was surveyed, he determined by degrees,



and at his leisure moments, to measure the whole district, with all the roads and paths, and to make a complete map.

In this map, every division of land, every hedge, every stile, every cottage was clearly shewn, in the proportion of a quarter of an inch to an acre; and when this large map was finished, it was hung up in the town-house. The peasants came in crowds to examine the plan, which amazed them greatly, for they soon understood it, and each recognised his own field, his garden, his orchard. But what most delighted them was, to find there the exact size of every field, meadow, or garden, even to half a foot; they never before had known exactly the extent of their property, and they carefully copied the figures, as in future it would be a great advantage to them, both in buying and selling: for hitherto the land had only been measured by stepping it, which gave much opportunity for deception; and this would now be effectually prevented. But when Oswald saw the people examining the map, he said to them, "That is not the greatest advantage which you may obtain from it; there is a still greater benefit." When they inquired what it was, he answered, "If you have not found it out by Michaelmas, I must tell you;" but no one discovered it.

When the parish assembled at Michaelmas to transact the usual business, as soon as it was terminated Oswald addressed them in these words: "You are all well acquainted with the map of our district,



so admirably executed by the schoolmaster, Johann Heiter, and his scholars. My good friends and neighbours: you have all admired it, but you have not understood the principal object for which it was made, and which I will now explain to you. When I surveyed that land which we cultivate by the sweat of our brow, I was often grieved to see that it cost us so much labour, and after all was not well cultivated, nor produced half as much as it might have done; and once, on casting my eyes over that map, an idea struck me, by means of which I thought we might remove one of the great defects in our farming. My dear neighbours: it is now as clear as day, that if you will but come to a good understanding among yourselves, the greater part of your land may be better cultivated, and at less cost of time and trouble than heretofore."

At this the peasants exclaimed, "There will be no difficulty in making us agree to any plan for diminishing the expense of farming."

"Then I wish you joy," said Oswald. "I will now teach you how to save that which is the most precious of all things, TIME. Each of you has acquired what land he possesses by degrees, some by inheritance, others by purchase. Many of you have small pieces of land, scattered in different parts of the country, at such distances that it takes a quarter of an hour to go from one field to another, which causes an immense waste of time, not only to the owners, but to the labourers and the cattle; a great part of

the day is spent in running backwards and forwards, and labourers are paid for hours which are utterly lost and bring no return. These continual interruptions prevent their working diligently, and interfere greatly with the careful cultivation of the land. Some persons are even deterred from buying more land, when they see how difficult and expensive it is to cultivate the little they have already, and how much time is consumed in going from one field to another. Now, if each man's land lay together, the same number of labourers would be sufficient for a much larger quantity, and you would have a better harvest."

"That is quite true," answered the peasants; "but how is it to be helped? A man cannot take his fields upon his shoulders, and place them altogether."

"You might," said Oswald, "do something which would have much the same effect, though I admit there are very great difficulties in the way of it. You have all studied the map, and understand perfectly the dimensions and situation of your own land. Why not exchange the scattered pieces with one another, until you have each collected your whole property into one single piece. Let every one consult with his neighbours, and those whose land touches his own. Some compensation can be given where there is a difference in the extent and quality of the land exchanged. And even should anyone be the loser of a few feet of land, he is very sure to gain considerably by the advantages arising from having all his property lying close together. If you cannot agree, choose some unprejudiced person

as arbitrator, or draw lots. I entreat you not to let any slight difficulties prevent your adopting so desirable an arrangement ; do not object to it, because you have been accustomed for so many years to the present state of things. You will find the result of the change to be that you will have more money without more trouble."

When Oswald ceased speaking, his audience gave strong symptoms of disapprobation ; they began to discuss the proposal with many shakes of the head, and though they allowed the idea was a good one, all appeared to think it was impossible to put it into execution.

Nevertheless, in their idle moments, they amused themselves with talking over the suggestion, and examining which of their fields they would be willing to part with, and which piece of land adjoining their own they wished to have in exchange. At first they merely talked of it in jest with their neighbours. One person did not like the first piece of land offered to him, but wished for another belonging to a third party, who was then applied to ; and by degrees everyone had formed his plan for improving his little farm by concentrating it in one spot. In a short time they began to negotiate with one another ; many persons succeeded, others failed ; but still there was a great improvement. One should have thought that the whole country was going to be sold by auction,—especially in the winter, when people had more leisure and sat and talked together during the long evenings

in each other's houses ; for the good folks of Golden-thal would now have been ashamed to spend their time in the alehouse, wasting their hard-earned money in drinking and disgracing themselves by intoxication ; they now preferred having their glass of ale on Sundays and holidays at home with their wives and children.

Oswald had said truly, that there were great difficulties in this exchange of land. Nevertheless, in the first half year, five of the small farmers had nearly succeeded in uniting the whole of their property ; this annoyed the others, who saw well enough the advantages of the change, and each man determined to make any sacrifice in order to concentrate his own possessions. Every evening they assembled in the town-house and surrounded the great map, talking and disputing so loudly on the merits of each acre of land that they might be heard in the street ; then some would come away in anger at the failure of their propositions, and return again speedily with fresh offers.

The result was, that year by year each farm was gradually rounded off, and the excellent effects were visible all over the country.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

## WHAT THE GOLDMAKERS' VILLAGE HAD BECOME.

GOLDENTHAL might now well be called a golden valley. The village lay in the centre of the most fruitful gardens ; buried, as it were, amid smiling and productive orchards, surrounded by rich meadows and yellow cornfields : is was truly a little paradise. The paths between the fields were clean and even, like the walks in a garden ; and the roads throughout the whole district were planted on each side with fruit-trees.

The village itself looked more like a flourishing market town, than the cluster of dirty hovels to which we first introduced our readers. The houses, though not large, were all clean and neat ; the windows bright and clear ; the doors and other wood-work frequently painted, and the walls whitewashed ; nearly all the roofs were covered with tiles, thatch being forbidden by the parish from fear of fire. Every new roof was either tiled or slated, many of them had lightning conductors, and almost all the windows were filled with flowers ; every cottage had its little garden carefully planted, and a line of beehives surrounded with aromatic herbs. If a stranger

traversed the village, he was saluted with the greatest civility; and the peasants joked and laughed together when they met, in a way that shewed they were on good terms with each other, and happy and contented with their lot. Even when working in the fields and gardens, their clothes, though coarse and simple, were clean and neat; neither dirt nor rags were to be seen. It is true that their faces were brown and sunburnt, but there was no dishevelled or matted hair, and health and strength were visible in their smiling countenances.

The young men of other villages preferred the Goldenthal maidens, for they were not only attractive and pretty, but excellent housewives, steady and economical. Even the sons of rich farmers from other places married girls from the Goldmakers' village, for they were rich in virtue, if not in gold. And if a young man from Goldenthal wished to marry, he might choose throughout the country, for people took good care how they refused their daughter to a Goldenthaler, even if they were richer than he; for they knew that their money would be turned to good account, and this contributed not a little to increase the prosperity of Goldenthal.

It was clear that no beggars or vagabonds could now be seen in the village; but what was more astonishing, there was no longer any appearance of poverty. Even the inmates of the poorhouse had plenty of food, and decent clothing; and in the smallest and meanest cottage, there was a degree of order and comfort which

impressed one with the idea that it was the abode of honest people. The floors were clean and well swept; benches, chairs, and tables without speck or spot; windows, crockery, and kitchen furniture bright and shining,—in short totally different from the pigsties which they formerly inhabited. It would have been a pleasure to live amongst so many good and prosperous people.

On holidays, during the whole summer, the village of Goldenthal was really a gay and beautiful sight. Numbers of people came from the town to spend a few hours in this pleasant place. The large new inn, which had been built (who would have thought it!) by one of the two-and-thirty poor members of the Goldmakers' league, was filled with families from the town who came to enjoy a little country air, and the sight of so much prosperity. Others went to the houses of their acquaintance, and every cottage garden was filled with parties feasting upon the fruit, milk, honey, and other rural dainties for which the village was famous, or amusing themselves at various games upon the smooth green turf, or sitting upon the clean benches at the cottage doors, shaded by spreading trees, watching the gay and happy groups of passers-by, or they assembled round the old lime-tree, where the young people of the village danced to their own gay singing till dark. Of course the townspeople were not ungrateful for the amusement and recreation which they experienced at Goldenthal, and the comfort and beauty of its houses and gardens was another source

of profit to its inhabitants. Even in winter the visits did not entirely cease. Parties were made in sledges to Goldenthal. It was worth seeing at all times.

The inhabitants of other villages heard of all this prosperity, and tried in vain to discover why no one ever came near them. They seriously believed that the Goldenthals were magicians, and bewitched people ; but, instead of endeavouring to practise those arts by means of which they were so successful, the other villagers remained in their original state of sloth and idleness and made no effort to improve. They never spoke of the Goldenthals without betraying their envy and malice, laughing at them and calling them the Goldmakers : and, in fact, this name was a very just one.

The Goldenthals cared little for this jealousy ; they persisted in their good conduct ; and their life, though one of toil and labour, had also much enjoyment. After a week of hard work, Sunday was truly a day of rest to them ; but no Goldenthaler spent it in a public-house ; they drank their beer at home : while the children, who were taught at school, often sang in parts as well as if they had been instructed in the capital. The old men and women sat comfortably together in the evening, and regaled themselves with homely country fare, and chatted merrily with each other. Drunkenness, robbery, lawsuits, or excesses of any kind were now quite unheard of ; for, with their increasing prosperity and their improvement in education, a certain feeling of honour and a love of



religion and morality had arisen among the peasantry themselves, which was totally unknown in other parts of the country. Even in the town, they could be distinguished at first sight from the inhabitants of other villages. Their dress was simple, and strikingly clean. If their clothes were coarse, their conduct was refined; their language was correct and civil, and their manners frank and kind. It must not be supposed, however, that this courteous, honest, and gentle demeanour was simply the result of the general prosperity, or the fruit of the improved education which the peasants now received; it was also to be attributed to the excellent laws and regulations of the overseers. For as the peasants began to grow richer, there were not wanting those who were anxious to get rid of the restraint they had imposed upon themselves, and were much inclined to return to their evil ways. Some became extravagant, and dressed their daughters ridiculously in all kinds of finery, and gave themselves great airs. Others took to gambling again, or returned to their old habits of drinking. All this excited great indignation among the well-conducted, who said, "If these people begin again in this way, we shall be worse off than ever." The other villagers were much displeased with those who forsook the simple and moral life, the benefits of which they were now beginning to experience, and they entreated the overseers to make better regulations for the preservation of order and morality.

So far from being angry at this reproach addressed

to the overseers, Oswald received it with the greatest delight. Strict regulations were immediately made, which forbade all variety of apparel, and fixed the exact dress of every class; and imposed very severe punishments upon all gambling of whatever description, upon drunkenness, slander, evil speaking, fighting, swearing, and every species of immorality. This had the desired effect: every one submitted; and those who felt inclined to do wrong were nevertheless deterred by the fear of shame, disgrace, and punishment.

This sumptuary law was read every year to the whole population, old and young. Men, women, and children were all obliged to hear it, and listen to any observations the parish officers deemed it advisable to make. After it had been read, the first overseer put this question to them, "Will you engage to obey this law, which is the foundation of our prosperity and honour, and of the peace and harmony in which we live?" And old and young answered, unanimously and distinctly, in the affirmative.

## CHAPTER XXX.

## THE CHRISTENING.

It was about this time, that his beloved Elizabeth presented Oswald with a son. This blessing had long been the object of his most fervent prayers, and great, indeed, was his delight at an event which appeared to him the summit of all human happiness. Soon afterwards, Oswald went to his friend the landlord of the Lion, one of the members of the Goldmakers' league so often mentioned; "My friend," said he, "I come for the first time to ask you a favour; I am sure you will not refuse me. I want five hundred florins, and I cannot leave my wife, who is still in her bed, to fetch them from the town: could you lend me that sum for eight days? I should prefer it in gold if possible."

The landlord of the Lion answered, "I owe everything that I possess to you, and will lend you the money with pleasure. I have just received eight hundred florins, and have them still in the house; but they are partly in silver: take them and keep them as long as you like."

Oswald thanked him, but said, "I had rather have gold; I have a particular reason for it."

"Well," said the landlord, "I will try and procure it for you. When do you want it?"

"Bring it to my house," answered Oswald, "to-morrow evening at eight o'clock; but say nothing about it to any one." When he had arranged this, he went on to the other one-and-thirty members of the league, and said exactly the same thing to them all, asking each man for the loan of five hundred florins in gold; every one rejoiced at having at last an opportunity of shewing their gratitude to this excellent man, and promised to bring him the money at the appointed time. The following evening at eight o'clock, they all arrived. Though it was already dark, Oswald conducted them into a room where there was no light; each man was considerably astonished at the numbers that arrived. At last, Oswald left them to fetch a light, and when he returned with two wax tapers in his hands, they beheld him, as they had once before seen him, in a splendid uniform, a feather in his hat, a star upon his breast, and a long sword by his side; they looked at one another with the greatest astonishment, and saw the very same persons who had met in that room, round that very table on which the officer now placed the lights, seven years before!

"My good friends," said Oswald, "if you have brought me that which I asked you for, now place it upon this table." They approached the table one

after another, and several persons apologized for not having brought the sum in gold; but Oswald told them kindly that it did not signify, and bid them put it down as they had brought it; some poured out heaps of gold, others silver, on the table, while many gave him the sum in bank notes.

Oswald then addressed them as follows: "The time of trial is now over, and the seven years and seven weeks of which I spoke to you, are ended; you have each of you spread more money upon this table, than I displayed to you seven years and seven weeks ago; at that time, you were scarcely worth five hundred kreutzers, and no one would have ventured to lend you money. Now, within four-and-twenty hours, each has produced five hundred florins, so that sixteen thousand florins have suddenly been collected upon this table. As I said before, the time of trial is now over, and I have taught you the art of making gold!

"Now you understand the meaning of what I said the first time you were here—I told you then that knowledge is better than gold, for this knowledge is true wisdom; continue to obey God, and keep your seven vows, and your happiness and prosperity will increase daily. He who is tired of his vows, must be tired of his happiness. Teach them to your children, and oblige them to keep them if they would be happy and wealthy. I have now fulfilled the promise I gave you; you are rich, because you earn much, and your wants are few. Now then, you have learnt to make gold as

good and honourable men do. Did you expect anything else?"

They all smiled and said, "No, no; we have long ago discovered what you meant by making gold. But when we had once found out the truth, we were ashamed of the superstitious folly which had at first misled us, and were truly grateful to you in our hearts for having taught us a better way, which, without your assistance, we should never have discovered."

Oswald was much gratified at these words, and the warmth and cordiality with which they all shook hands with him and thanked him. He returned their money, which he did not want, for he had only wished to make a trial of their good will towards him. But they said, "Remember that we are always at your orders, day and night. We owe all our happiness to you; we would go through fire and water to serve you; we would die for you! Speak, what is there we can do for you?"

And as they all pressed round him to examine his fine coat, and the star on his breast, they began to question him as to the meaning of it all; to which he answered, "I owe everything to my late father, your former schoolmaster, who instructed me in many useful things, particularly in surveying and engineering. This, when I became a soldier with an honest heart and sound principles, enabled me to distinguish myself above my comrades. I did my duty, and I was made an officer. During an engagement, in which

the Prince having advanced too far, was suddenly surrounded by the enemy's cavalry, I dashed forward with my squadron of dragoons, and had the good fortune to save the Prince's life. It was then I received the wound across my forehead, and was rewarded by this order as a mark of the Prince's gratitude ; and on my quitting the army when peace was made, a considerable pension was bestowed on me for life. The Prince has never forgotten me ; and, as you know, paid me a visit when he was in this neighbourhood. But when I returned to Goldenthal, the dear home of my early days, and found how wretched and miserable it had become, I concealed my real situation that I might not be surrounded with beggars. I had lost all wish to remain here, and should have left the place immediately, had I not met with Elizabeth. My beloved Elizabeth kept me here ; and I determined to try what could be done for the reformation of my native village. I told no one of my honours, or of the pension which I enjoyed. To Elizabeth's parents alone, when I asked for their daughter's hand, did I explain my true position, otherwise they would not have given her to me, a poor wanderer. But when I brought them to my house and showed them my uniform and the order, and read to them the king's gracious letter, conferring an income upon me larger than their mill would produce in three years, then they were of a different opinion. They promised, however, to keep my secret, as it was necessary to the success of my plan. Now, every one

may know it. I have succeeded beyond my highest expectations !”

When he had finished speaking, all the Goldmakers congratulated him, rejoicing at his good fortune ; but they could not conceal the awe with which he now inspired them, and no longer dared to approach him familiarly as heretofore. But he said, “ What is the meaning of this ? Am I not your brother and countryman as before, and ready to advise and assist you in every way ? It is not an embroidered coat, but the fear of God in an honest heart which should inspire respect.”

He then took leave of them kindly and affectionately, and invited them all to the christening of his child ; while they renewed their thanks, saying, they owed everything to him, and calling him their father and benefactor.

Three days after, on the following Sunday, Oswald's child was to be christened ; the whole village was early in motion. Oswald approached his Elizabeth, and tenderly embracing the mother and child, said, “ Dearest Elizabeth, my heart is overflowing with joy and gratitude to God ; great as is the happiness which the birth of our son has given me, it is surpassed by the delight I feel at the prosperity of our village. Truly, mankind are not so bad or so heartless as they are represented. One should never allow oneself to doubt the possibility of doing them good. And now see, during the night, they have ornamented our house with wreaths of flowers, as they did on



our wedding-day ; but that is not all. Every house in the village is covered with flowers and green branches, as if it were a day of rejoicing for them all, as well as for us. And the whole road from our house to the church is bordered with young trees and long garlands of flowers thrown across from one side to the other, and the ground is strewn with green leaves and flowers !”

When Elizabeth heard these words, she was so touched with this simple testimony of gratitude, that she could not restrain her tears ; she merely answered, “ I heard a strange noise in the night, and could not imagine what it meant.” But she could not remain in bed, and insisted on going to the window to see it all. There she wept sweet tears of joy and emotion ; nothing is more touching to a tender heart, than to see the efforts that have been made for the good of others successful and gratefully appreciated. It is a foretaste of Heaven, and a sufficient reward for every sacrifice.

The miller and his wife, who were to be godfather and godmother, soon arrived. The good lady was in ecstasies, and repeated a dozen times how beautifully the house was decorated ! how gay the village looked ! exclaiming, “ Well ! there never was such a christening seen in Goldenthal before !—what could they do more for the birth of a prince ?” Whilst she was speaking, a number of boys and girls approached Oswald’s house, walking in pairs and dressed in their holiday clothes. Each placed some slight offering

from their parents on the cradle of the new-born infant; one a piece of snow-white linen of their own weaving; another brought gloves, another stockings, others dried fruit, honey, flowers; each family sent some trifle. There were as many presents as there were houses in the village; and all the children kissed Oswald's and Elizabeth's hands, calling them their father and their mother. What words could have sounded sweeter to their ears?—what studied speech could have expressed as much as these simple words? The bells were ringing loudly and merrily; the new-born babe was carried to church, followed by the father, who could scarcely conceal his emotion. He found all the inhabitants of the village assembled before the church to meet him; they received him with warm and heartfelt congratulations, and accompanied him into the church. After the ceremony, Roderick the clergyman made an excellent discourse upon the duty of the people to shew their gratitude for a good government. Never before had his preaching seemed so touching and inspired; every word went straight to the hearts of his hearers: they listened with the utmost attention, and some could not refrain from tears, for they all applied his words to Oswald; and their hearts overflowed with gratitude for the benefits which he, by the mercy of God, had been the instrument of bestowing on them. All considered him as the cause of the general prosperity; and when the clergyman, with a faltering voice, mentioned him by name at the conclusion, and in-

voked a blessing from the Almighty upon him, there was not a dry eye in the church ; and never had the voices of a grateful multitude been raised to Heaven with more earnestness and devotion, than in the hymn of thanksgiving which concluded the ceremony. Oswald, though inexpressibly happy, was so confused and agitated, that he scarcely knew where he was ; and, forcing his way through the friendly crowd at the church door, he hurried home to his Elizabeth, almost speechless with emotion. His wife's father and mother, the clergyman, the schoolmaster, and the other overseers dined with him ; they related that, in almost every house in the village, there were dinners given, the rich feasting their poorer neighbours. Oswald shook his head, and said, " Too much, too much ! I have not deserved these honours." But the universal joy was contagious ; he soon recovered himself ; and, accompanied by his guests, he visited every cottage in the village, remaining a few moments with each family, and thanking them for these testimonies of their affection.

Nothing could equal the gaiety of Goldenthal. Many had come from a distance to witness the rejoicings ; and the dance, and the song, and the merry laugh were prolonged in the gardens and under the lime-tree till late in the evening.

This happy day was long remembered in Goldenthal ; and none of the villagers ever addressed Oswald and Elizabeth otherwise than by the endearing names of father and mother.

Truly may we say that the good seed which is sown in faith and hope will, sooner or later, yield a rich harvest ; for a merciful God watches over us,— a Father full of love and pity.



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